TO THE

MOST REVEREND

LADY, THE LA.

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MADAME,

These tvvo follovving discourses, *Of Mentall Prayer*, and *Of the Presence of God*, vvhich I haue heer translated,

ſlated, vvere compoſed by that Reuerend, and holy man, *Father Alfonſo Rodriguez*, of the Society of *Ieſus*.

His vvhole Worke vvas deuided by him into three Partes, and they are intituled, *Of Religious Perfection*. He vvas Maiſter of the Nouices at *Seuill*, and theſe Writings, vvere indeed but the Dictats, vvhich he deliuered, for the inſtruction, and perfection of thoſe ſoules, vvhich God

committed then to his charge.

I did the rather take this preſent taske in hand, to the end that my exãple might perſvvade ſome better Pen, to tranſlate the other Parts of this excellẽt Worke. Wherof I haue heard it affirmed by many, of great iudgment in matters of this nature, that they haue not ſeen any thing deliuered in the vvay of Vertue, either more high on the one ſide, or more

easy, and ſubiect to practiſe, on the other.

And, by the vvay, it vvill appeare to any indifferẽt honeſt eye, hovv vnlikely it is, for the Religious men of this Order, to haue any thing in thẽ of that ſpirit, vvhich either Heretikes, or Politikes, or other enuious perſõs lay to their charg, vvhoſe vvhole youth, & firſt inſtitution in their Order, is ſtrictly ruled, & framed by ſuch principles, & practiſes of Chriſtian

ſtian Piety, and Perfe-ction, as are deliuered, & recommended both, in theſe tvvo diſcourſes follovving, and indeed, in all the reſt, of this Author. VVhich yet hovvſoeuer, the Reader muſt not thinke to belong alone to Religious men, though (in regard of theyr vocation) they are moſt particulerly obliged to perfect themſelues in Gods ſeruice.

For I hope there is no true Chriſtiã, vvho vvill

deny, or doubt, but that (if he vvill be as good as his vvord vvhilſt he calls himſelf by that name) he muſt frequent the exerciſe of *Prayer*; & conſider alſo, that God is euer *preſent* vvith him, to the end, that his ovvne actions, may ſo become leſſe vnvvorthy, to appeare in the ſight of that diuine Maieſty.

As for the dedication vnder your La^p. Name, it is moſt due to you from me, vpon a vvorld of rea-

reaſons. And ſince I am not able to do you better ſeruice, you vvill accept of theſe my deſires, inſteed of deedes, vvho am ready to auow, in the eye of the vvhole vvorld, that nothing muſt euer be in my *Powver*, vvhich ſhall not inſtantly be alſo in my *VVill*, vvhen there may be queſtion of expreſſing *Gratitude*, [redacted] to your Ladiſhip: to vvhoſe prayers, togeather vvith thoſe of the holy Company, vvhich

vvhich hath the happy-nes to be gouerned by you, I do moſt humbly and earneſtly commend my ſoule.

Your Lad^ps. moſt humble faythfull Seruant euer.

T. B.

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Of Mentall Prayer.

CHAP. I.

Of the Value, and Excellency of Prayer.

THE glorious Apoſtle, and Euangeliſt *S. Iohn*, in the fifth, & eight Chapters of his *Apocalyps*, doth well declare the value and excellency of Prayer, and ſayth: *That the Angell ſtood before the Altar and held an Inſenſary of Gold in his hand; and that a great quantity of Incenſe was giuen to him, which were the Prayers of the Saints; to the end, that he might offer them vp before the Altar of Gold, which ſtood before the Throne of God: and that the ſmoke of that Incenſe, did aſcend, from the*

hand of that Angell, into the preſence of God.

Chryſ. ho. 13. ſuper Matth. in opere imperfect.

S. Chryſoſtome ſpeaking vpon this place ſayth: Hereby you may diſcerne how high & pretious a thing *Prayer* is, ſince it alone, is compared in holy Scripture to *Thymiama*, which was a confection of Incenſe, and other things, moſt odoriferouſly fragrant. Becauſe, as *Thymiama*, being well compounded, and framed, did extraordinarily delight mē by the odour of it; ſo that *Prayer*, which is made, as it ought, is very ſweet and and pleaſing to Almighty God; and doth delight and recreate the holy Angells, and all the other Cittizens of Heauen. In ſuch ſorte, as that *S. Iohn* ſayth, They haue in their hands, as it were ſo many pomanders of admirable odour, which are the Prayers of the Saints; wherunto they do very often apply their moſt pure ſent, (to ſpeake after the manner of men) that ſo they may enioy this moſt ſweet ſmell: *Habentes ſinguli, Phialas aureas, plenas odoramentorum, quæ ſunt orationes Sanctorum.*

Guiller. Pariſ. in ſua Rhetor. part. 4. c. 4.

Aug. in tract. de miſericor. Tom. 10.

S. Auguſtine ſpeaking of *Prayer* ſaith: *Quid eſt oratione clarius? quid vita noſtra vtilius? quid animo dulcius? quid in tota no-*

ſtra

nostra religione sublimius? What thing is there more excellent? What more profitable? what more delightful, and sweet? what more sublyme, and high in all our Christian Religion, then Prayer? *S. Gregory* of *Nice*, sayth the same: *Nihil ex his, quæ per hanc vitam colluntur & in precio sunt, oratione præstat.* *Greg. Niss. de orat. Domin.*

S. Bernard sayth, That although it be certaine, that the Angells do very ordinarily assist the seruants of God with their inuisible presence, so to deliuer them from the fraudes & sleights of the Enemy, and to set forward their desires of seruing God, with greater feruour: Yet much more assistance do those Angelicall spirits giue, when we imploy our selues, in making *Prayer*. And he bringeth to this purpose, many places of Holy Scripture; as that of the Psalmist, *In conspectu Angelorum psallam tibi:* I will praise thee, in the presence of the Angells. *Præuenerunt Principes coniuncti psallentibus, in medio iuuencularum tympanistriarum;* which he also declareth of the Angells, who associate themselues to such as pray. And that also, which the Angell said to *Tobias*: *When* *Ber. ser. 7. super Cãt. & Ep. 78.* *Psal. 137.* *Psal. 67.* *Tob. 12.* *12.*

thou didſt pray with teares, I offered vp thy Prayers to God. For when the Prayer iſſueth out of his mouth who maketh it, iuſt then, do the Angells, who are preſet, offer it vp to God. *S. Hilary* ſayth the ſame thing: *Angeli præſunt fidelium orationibus, & eas quotidie Deo offerunt.* So that when we be in Prayer, we are inuironed, and circled in by Angells; & our ſelues are alſo doing the office of Angells; and we are practiſing, and exerciſing our ſelues in that, which hereafter we are to do continually in Heauen, and that is, to bleſſe & praiſe our Lord. And for this cauſe, we are particulerly fauoured, and beloued by the Angells, as being their Companions now, & being alſo expected to be ſo hereafter; filling vp thoſe ſeates, which grew empty, by the fall of their fellowes.

Hilar. can. 3. in Mat.

S. Chryſoſtome, treating of the excellency of *Prayer*, and being deſirous to expreſſe the greatneſſe of it, ſayth: That one of the higheſt greatneſſes which did occur to be expreſſed by him, was this, That whoſoeuer maketh *Prayer*, doth confer, and treate with God himſelfe;

Chryſ. lib. 2. de orando Deum.

ſelfe: *Conſidera quanta eſt tibi conceſſa felicitas, quanta gloria attributa, orationibus fabulari cum Deo; cum Chriſto miſcere colloquia; optare quod velis; quod deſideras poſtulare.* Conſider the dignity, & the glory to which our Lord hath exalted thee, in that he hath giuen thee power, to treate and conuerſe with him; to haue conuerſation, & ſpeach of intercourſe with Ieſus Chriſt; to deſire what thou wilt, and to aske what thou deſyreſt. *There is no tongue* (ſayth he) *which can atriue to declare of how great dignity, & height, this treating and conuerſing is, with Almighty God; and of how great vſe and profit to vs.* For if they, who haue their ordinary conuerſation here on earth, with wiſe and prudent men, do feele much profit in ſhort tyme; & it growes quickly to be knowne, that they are much improued in wiſdome, & knowledge; & if they, who hold familiarity with vertuous men, do ſucke of that vertue into themſelues, (as the Prouerbe doth thus expreſſe) *Conuerſe with good men, & thy ſelfe wilt growe to be one of them;* what ſhall become of ſuch perſons, as conuerſe & treate, in frequent, & familiar

manner, with Almighty God? *Accedite ad Deum & illuminamini*. What light, & knowledge, what benefits and benedictions, will they receaue by such cõuersation, and communication as this? And so *S. Chrysostome* sayth: That there is nothing, which maketh vs so much growe in vertue, as much *Prayer*, and frequent conuersation with Almighty God. For thus the hart of man, growes to be truly generous, and to haue the things of this world in great cõtempt; and to raise himselfe aboue them all; and to vnite, and transforme himselfe, after a certaine manner, into God; and to become, in fine, a spirituall person, and a Saint.

Psa. 33.

Chrysos. ho. 20 orat. & super illud Ps. 7. Confitebor Domino secundum Iustitiam eius.

Chap. II.

Of the great Necessity, which we haue of Prayer.

HOvv necessary *Prayer* is for vs, we haue inough, & inough experience. I would to God (if he were so pleased,) that we had not so much. Now, since man is so full of need of

Gods fauour, in reſpect that he is ſubiect to the taking of ſo many falls; and that he is inuironed by ſo many, and ſo fierce enemyes; and laboureth vnder the want of ſo many things, which belong aſwell to the ſoule as the body; there remaines no other remedy for him, but euer to be reſorting to God; beſeeching him, with his whole hart, to be fauourable to him, and that he will help him out of all his dangers, & neceſſities, according to that which King *Ioſaphat* ſaid (whē he foūd himſelf hem'd in by his enemyes:) *Cùm ignoremus quid agere debeamus, hoc ſolùm habemus reſidui, vt oculos noſtros dirigamus ad te.* Since we are ſo weake, ſince we are ſo poore, and needy, and know not which way to turne our ſelues, we haue no other remedy, but onely to caſt vp our eyes to God, and with our harts to beg of him, thoſe things wherof we are in ſo great neede. And ſo Pope *Celeſtine*, in one of his Decretall Epiſtles, to teach the importance of Prayer, ſpeaketh thus; I know not what better thing to ſay to you, then that which *Zozimus* my Predeceſſour ſayd, *Quod eſt tempus, in quo*

2. Paral. 20. 2.

Celeſt. ca. 9. contra Pelagium.

eius

eius auxilio non indigemus? in omnibus igitur rebus, cauſis, & negotijs, exorandus eſt Protector Deus. What tyme is there, wherein we haue not neceſſity of the help of God? There is no ſuch tyme. If that be ſo, then are we, at all tymes, and in all occaſions, and in all affayres, to reſort to God by Prayer, with deſyre that he will protect vs. *Superbū eſt enim, vt humana natura aliquid de ſe præſumat.* For a great pride it is, that a frayle and miſerable man, ſhould preſume any litle vpon himſelfe.

S. Tho. 2. 2. q. 83. ar. 2. Damaſc. l. 3. fidei ca. 24. Aug. l. 2. de ſer. Domini in mon. & ſer. 250. de temp. Baſilius in Iul. mart. Chryſ. ho. 30. in Geneſim. Gre. l. 2. dial. c. 8.

S. Thomas proues the neceſſity of Prayer, by a very ſolide, and ſubſtantiall reaſon; and it is the doctrine of the Saints *Damaſcen, Auguſtine, Baſill, Chryſoſtome,* and *Gregory.* Theſe Saints declare, that the things which God, by his diuine wiſdom and diſpoſition, did determine, from all *Eternity,* to giue to ſoules; he would impart in time, by meanes of *Prayer*; and that by this meanes, he had reſolued vpon the redreſſe, the conuerſion, and the ſaluation of many ſoules; and vpon the progreſſe, and perfection of many others: in ſuch ſort, that as God diſpoſed and determined,

mined, that by meanes of marriage, mankind should be multiplyed; and that by plowing, and sowing, & cultiuating the ground otherwise, there should grow abundance of bread, and wine, and other fruits of the earth; and that, by meanes of Artificers, and materialls, houses, and buildings should be erected: So did he also ordayne to worke great effects in the world, and to communicate many graces & guifts to soules, by this meanes of *Prayer*. And so did Christ our Redeemer assure vs, in the Ghospell: *Petite & dabitur vobis, quærite & inuenietis, pulsate & aperietur vobis: omnis enim qui petit, accipit, & qui quærit, inuenit, & pulsanti aperitur.* Aske and it shalbe giuen, seeke and you shall finde, knock and it shalbe opened vnto you: for he who asketh receyueth, he who seeketh findeth, & to him who knocketh, it shalbe opened. Matt. 7.

So that *Prayer*, is the meanes & maister-conduit, wherby our Lord wilbe pleased to releiue our necessityes, to inrich our pouerty; & to repleniſh vs with benedictions and graces. Wherby we see well, the great necessity which

we

we haue of frequenting *Prayer*. And ſo the Saints do frame, a very fit compariſon, when they affirme, that *Prayer* is as a *chayne* of Gold, one end wherof is hooked vp in heauen, & the other end reacheth downe to the earth; and that, by this *chayne*, all celeſtiall graces, are deriued, and drawne downe to vs; and by the ſame, our ſelues aſcend, & moũt vp to God. And we may alſo ſay, that this is a kind of *Iacobs* Ladder, *which reacheth from heauen to earth; and wherby the Angells do aſcend, and deſcend.*

Gen. 28. 12.

Aug. ſer. 26.

The glorious *S. Auguſtine* ſayth, that Prayer is the *Key of Heauen*, which is made, to open all the gates therof; and of all thoſe coffers which are full of the treaſures of God, without excepting any one. *Oratio iuſti, clauis eſt cæli: aſcendit precatio, & deſcendit Dei miſeratio.* And els where he ſayth: That looke what breade is to the body, that very thing is Prayer to the ſoule: *Sicut ex carnalibus eſcis alitur caro, ita ex diuinis eloquijs & orationibus, interior homo nutritur, & paſcitur.* And the ſame is affirmed, by the holy Martyr, & Abbot *Nilus*.

Aug. exhort. de ſalut. ſtribus monitis ad quẽdam Comitem ca. 28.

Nilus ca. 25. de orat. in bib. SS. PP. to. 3.

One of the moſt principall conſi-

derations,

derations, wherby the Saintes declare the value, and eſtimation which we ought to make of *Prayer*, on the one ſide; and on the other, the great neceſſity which we haue therof; is, becauſe *Prayer*, is a very principall, and efficacious meanes, to order and addreſſe our life, and to explayne, or ouercome all thoſe difficultyes, which may offer themſelues to vs, in the way of vertue. And ſo they ſay, that vpon it, depends the gouermẽt of our life; & that when *Prayer* is well made, the life is well led; and that when Prayer is diſcompoſed, the life groweth alſo into diſorder. *Rectè nouit viuere, qui rectè nouit orare*, ſayth *S. Auguſtine*. He knoweth how to liue well, who knoweth how to pray wel. *Aug. hoꝫ 4. ex 150. quæ eius nomine circumfe*

And *S. Iohn Climacus* ſayth, that a ſeruant of God deliuered a memorable ſpeach to him; and it was this. *By the very beginning of the morning, I do already know, what kind of dayes worke, it will be; Giuing to vnderſtand therby, that if he complyed well with his Prayer, in the morning, all the reſt would ſucceed well; and ſo, that it would fall contrarily out, if either he did not comply with it at all, or els did it not ſo well, as he* Climacus

as he could. And the ſame rule holds, with all the reſt of a mans life. Our ſelues do take daily experiment herof; ſo that when we make our *Prayer* well, we go ſo well in order, ſo cheerfull, & ſo full of good purpoſes and deſires, that it is to make one wonder; and contrariwiſe, if we take no care of our *Prayer*, all the good which we had gotten, is in the way to be loſt.

Bonauen. de progreſ. religionis. ca. 7.

S. Bonauenture ſayth: *Sine iſto ſtudio, omnis religio eſt arida, imperfecta, & ad ruinã promptior.* By not reſorting to Praier all goes backward, and by and by comes in tepidity; and then by litle and litle, the ſoule begins to grow weake and to wither, and to looſe that vigor, and breath, which it had before. And then, I know not how, thoſe holy purpoſes and firſt thoughts, grow to vaniſh; and then begin to awake, and reuiue all our paſſions. Soone after, will a man finde himſelfe, to become much inclined to vayne mirth, and to talking and laughing, and paſſing away tyme idly, and ſuch other vanityes as thoſe; and that which is worſe, the appetite of vayne glory is reuiued, and

and the appetite of ambition, & ſuch other things, as formerly ſeemed to haue beene dead.

The Abbot *Nilus* ſayth, That Praier is to be the glaſſe of the religious man, and in this glaſſe, are we to view and reuiew our ſelues daily, & that at leaſure, that ſo we may come to ſee and know our faults, & to be remouing ſuch deformityes, as we ſhall diſcouer in our ſelues. And in this glaſſe alſo, are we to behold and conſider, the vertues which ſhine in Chriſt our Lord; to the end that we may go adorning, & beautifying our ſoules, by the contemplation therof. Nilus.

The glorious *S. Francis* was wont to ſay, *Gratia orationis, viro religioſo maximè deſideranda eſt: nullus enim ſine ea, in Dei ſeruitio, fructus ſperari poteſt.* One of the things, which the religious man were to deſyre moſt, is the grace or guift of Prayer: foraſmuch as without it, no fruit or profit can be hoped for, and by it we may hope for any thing. *S. Thomas of Aquine*, amongſt many other graue ſentences which are related as from his mouth, in the hiſtory of his life, was wont

Lib. 2. Conformit. p. 1. hiſt. Miſcel. c. 7.

S. Tho. p. hiſt. & Domuici li. 3. c. 37.

wont to say, *That a religious man, without Prayer, was like a souldier, sent vnarmed into a battayle.*

Tho. de Villa noua [illegible] 13. vitæ [illegible] Note.

That holy Archbishop of Valencia, *Thomas de Villanoua* said, that Prayer was like naturall heate in a mans stomack, without which it was impossible for the naturall life to preserue it selfe, or, » that meate should do it any good; but » with that, any meat is disgested & con- » cocted well, and the man is well nou- » rished, and all the parts of the body are » supplyed with vertue and strength, for » the performance of al their operations: » So, sayth he, without Prayer, the spiri- » tuall life of man cannot be conserued, » but with Prayer it may. For by *Prayer* » the soule is refreshed, and the spirit gets » strength, for all the Actions, and Obe- » diences which it is to performe; and » against all troubles, and difficultyes » which it is to vndergoe. By the helpe » of *Prayer*, all these things grow to be » disgested, and made passable, & prooue » good bloud for the soule.

Finally, if we make that vse of *Prayer* which we ought, we shall find therein, full remedy of all our infirmi-

tyes

tyes, and meanes to conſerue vs in *Religion* and vertue; for if perhaps you forget your ſelues in point of *Obedience*, & obſeruation of your *Rules*; if you begin to take certaine little libertyes; if that paſſiō which you are moſt ſubiect to, ſhould reſume a litle life, & reflouriſh; by laying hold vpō the help of *Prayer*, all theſe inconueniences, will with the fauour of our Lord, be ſoone checked, & ſtayed. And if by chance, you grow negligent, euen in the vſe of *Prayer* it ſelfe, and ſhould conſent to ſome tepiditeyes therein; yet, by meanes of the ſelfe ſame *Prayer*, you are to procure the remedy, and to returne into your ſelues. We are furniſhed by *Prayer*, againſt all kind of inconueniences, yea and euen againſt the defects of *Prayer* it ſelfe. And therfore they do very well compare *Prayer*, who ſay, *That it is as the hand to the body, which is both an inſtrument for the whole body, and for it ſelfe alſo.* For the hand laboureth, to the end that the whole body, may be ſuſteyned, & for all things which are neceſſary eyther to the body or the ſoule; and ſo it doth alſo labour for it ſelfe. For if the *hand* Note.

be

be sore, the *hand* cureth the hand; if the *hand* be fowle, it washeth it; if it be cold, it warmeth it; in fine, the *hand* is fit for all things: and iust so it is, in the case of *Prayer*.

Chap. III.

That we are much bound to God, for having made that thinge so easy to vs, which on the one side is so Excellent, *and on the other so* Necessary.

IT is but reason that we consider, & ponder here, the great, and singuler fauour which our Lord God hath done vs, in ordayning, that *Prayer*, being in it selfe a thing so excellent, and so high, and being yet so very necessary, forasmuch as concerneth vs; he hath yet withall, made it so easy, as to place it in the hand, or power of vs all; & we may vse it, at all tymes, and in all places, if we be disposed. *Apud me oratio, Deo vitæ meæ*: Prayer is at hand with me; to the end I may make it to my God, who giues me life, sayth the Prophet *Dauid*. Those gates of the mercy of God, are neuer shut, but they

Ps. 41. 9.

stand

ſtand open to all; and at all tymes, we ſhall euer find him at leaſure, and deſirous to ſhew vs fauour, yea and euen ſoliciting vs, to aske it of him.

It is an excellent conſideration, which is vſually brought to this purpoſe. If Almighty God ſhould giue leaue, for once only in the Moneth, that all ſuch as would, might enter into his preſence to ſpeake with him; and that then, he would giue them glad and gratefull audience, & would grant their ſuites: without doubt, it ought to be highly eſteemed, ſince it would be highly eſteemed if any temporall King ſhould offer it. But then how much more is it fit, that we value it, as we ought, comming from the hand of God: eſpecially ſince he offreth it, and inuiteth vs to it, not only for once in the moneth, but for euery day, yea and many tymes in the ſame day. *Veſpere, & mane, & meridie, narrabo, & annunciabo, & exaudiet vocem meam*, ſayth the Prophet imbracing all tymes, by this ſpeach of his. At night, in the morning, at mid-day, and in the euening, I will relate, & repreſent my troubles & Pſal. 54. 18.

my miſeries to Almighty God: & I am full of confidence, that wherſoeuer & whenſoeuer I ſhall reſort to him, he will heare me, & do me fauour. God is not weary to haue vs aske of him, as mē vſe to be: becauſe he growes not poore by giuing, as they vſe to do. For man how much more he giueth to another, ſo much the leſſe remaines to himſelfe, ſo that he takes from himſelfe, what he giues to them, and he impouerisheth himſelfe, aſmuch as he enricheth them.

And from hence it is, that men grow weary and diſguſted, when they are peſtered with ſuiters; and if they giue twice, or thrice, with a good will, they will yet be weary, againſt the next tyme, and eyther they giue no more, or els they do it, in ſuch a faſhion, as that it may be the laſt. But God as the Apoſtle *S. Paul* ſayth, *Eſt diues in omnes qui inuocant illum*: he is infinitly rich, & ſince he growes not poore by giuing, he is not diſguſted & growes not weary in being aſked, althogh all the world in euery minut of time ſhold be making ſuites. For he is rich towards all, & deſires to inrich vs all, without leauing

Ad Rom. 10. 12.

to

to be as rich as he was before. And as his riches are infinite, so also his mercy is infinite towards the redresse of al the miseryes of vs all. And he desires, that we should beg often, and that we should euer be reforting to him.

It is reason therefore, that we acknowledge, and shew all gratitude, for so great a benefit and fauour; and that we serue our selues well, of such a large and profitable leaue; procuring to be very assiduous, in the vse of *Prayer*. For, as *S. Augustine* sayth, vpon these words, *Benedictus Deus, qui nō amouit orationem meam, & misericordiam suam à me*: you may hold for certaine, that if our Lord do not take the vse of *Prayer* from you, as litle will he take from you his *Mercy*. To the end therefore, that our Lord may not deuide his *Mercy* from vs; let vs procure that we neuer leaue the vse of *Prayer*, nor deuide it from our selues. *Ps. 65. 20.*

Chap. IV.

Of two Kinds of Mentall Prayer.

LEAVING apart *Vocall Prayer*, which is an *Exercise* so holy, & so

much frequented by the *Church of God*, I will now, only treat of that, which is *Mentall*, wherof *S. Paul* the Apoſtle ſpeakes, when he writes to the *Corinthians*; *Orabo ſpiritu, orabo & mente; pſallã ſpiritu, pſallam & mente.* I will pray, I will ſing, and I will cry out, with my ſpirit, and with my hart. Two Kinds there are of *Mentall Prayer*. The one is common, and plaine; the other is moſt eſpeciall, extraordinary, and of particuler priuiledge, with indeed may be ſaid rather to be receiued, thẽ to be offered, or made; for ſo thoſe anciẽt Saints, who were well verſed in *Prayer*, did vſe to expreſſe themſelues. *S. Dionyſius* the *Areopagite*, ſayth of his Maiſter *Hierotheus*, *Quod erat patiens diuina:* Wherby he meant to ſay, that he did not ſo much operate, as receaue that, which was giuen him by Almighty God.

1. Cor. 14.

Dionyſ. l. 2. de Diuin. nominib.

There is a very great difference, betweene theſe two kinds of *Prayer*. For the former, may be taught, in ſome ſort, by wordes; but we are not able to teach the later, becauſe wordes are not able to declare it. *Quia nemo ſcit, niſi qui accipit.* It is a kind of *hidden Manna*, wherof

Apoc. 2. 17.

wherof no body knoweth, what it is, but he who taſtes it. Yea, and euen he, cannot declare how it is, neither doth himſelfe vnderſtand, how it growes. *Caſsian* notes very well, and brings for this purpoſe, a ſentence of *S. Antony* the Abbot, which he calleth celeſtiall, & diuine; *Diuina, celeſtis, & pluſquã humana ſententia: Non eſt perfecta oratio, in qua ſe Monachus, vel hoc ipſum quod orat, intelligit.* It is no perfect *Prayer* (ſaith this Saint) when one remembreth himſelf, or vnderſtandeth exactly what he prayeth. This high, and ſublime, rich Kind of *Prayer*, doth not permit to him who prayes, that he conſider then, what he is performing: nor, that he make reflection vpõ what he is doing, or (to ſpeake more properly) what he is, not ſo much doing, as ſuffering.

Caſsian. collat. 9. Abbatis Iſaac. c. 3.

As heere below it happeneth many tymes, that a man wilbe ſo abſorpt, & inebriated (as it were) with a buſineſſe, that he remembers not himſelfe, nor conſiders, where he is; nor makes reflection vpon what he thinkes; nor obſerues, in what ſort he thinks it. And iuſt ſo, in this perfect Kind of *Prayer*, a

Note.

man is so taken, and absorpt in God, that he re embers not himselfe, nor knowes not how that is, nor by what way it comes, nor by what way it goes; nor cares he then, for any Inuentions, nor Preambles, nor Points; nor considers he whether this, or that, be fit to follow, in his *Prayer*. This arriued to the foresaid *S. Anthony*, by the relation of *Cassian*, who put himselfe to Prayer in the euening, and continued therein, till the Sunne, of the day following, strucke his eyes; and he complayned of that Sun, for rising so early, and taking from him, that other light, which our Lord, interiorly bestowed vpon him.

Bern. in ser. in Dominicam infra oct. Epiphan.

S. Bernard sayth of this Kind of *Prayer*: *Rara hora, & breuis mora.* This hower comes but seldome, and when it comes, the tyme seemes short, wherin it lasts. For how long soeuer it be, it seemes to haue passed, assoone as a breath of wind would do. *S. Augustine* feeling this kind of *Prayer* in himselfe,

Aug. Confess. lib. 10. cap. 40.

sayth thus to God: *Aliquando intromittis me in affectum, multum inusitatum, introrsus, ad nescio quam dulcedinem, quæ si perficiatur*

tur in me, nescio quid erit, quod vita ista non erit. Sometimes thou draweſt me, into an interior, & moſt vnuſuall affection of mind; to a ſweetnes which is beyõd all expreſſion; and which, if it might be continued and perfected in me, I know not what that felicity might be, which would not be conteyned, in ſuch a life as this.

In this moſt ſpeciall-kind of *Prayer*, and *Contemplation*, *S. Bernard* placeth three degrees. The firſt, he compareth to *Eating*, the ſecond to *Drinking* (which is done with more facility & delight then *Eating*, for there is no trouble in the chewing) and the third, in being *Inebriated*. And he brings to this purpoſe, that of the Spouſe in the *Canticles*, *Comedite amici, & bibite, & inebriamini chariſsimi.* He ſayth firſt, come *Eate*; ſecondly, come and *Drinke*; and thirdly, come and *Inebrietate* your ſelues, with this Loue. This laſt, is the moſt perfect; And this, is rather to *receaue*, then to *impart*. Somtimes the *Gardiner* drawes the water, out of the *Well*, by the ſtrength of this armes; and ſometymes, whilſt he holds his hands, one by the

Note

Cant. 5.

other, comes a *ſhower* frō heauen, which ſincks into, and ſoftens the earth; & the *Gardiner* hath then no more to do, but to let it come, and to addreſſe it to the roote of thoſe trees, to th'end that they may bring forth fruite.

So it is, with theſe two Kinds of *Prayer*. For the one of them, is ſought with induſtry, being yet aſſiſted by Gods grace; but the other is ready made to the hand. In the firſt, thou goeſt labouring, and begging, and feeding vpon that very beggery. But the ſecond, doth furniſh thee, with a full table, which God himſelfe, hath prepared for thee, to free thee from all hunger; a table, full of riches and abundance: *Introduxit me Rex in cellaria ſua*, ſayth the *Spouſe*; And Iſay the Prophet, ſayth: *Lætificabo eos, in domo orationis meæ*: *I will recreate and regale them, in the houſe of my Prayer.*

Cant. 1.3.

Iſa. 56. 7.

This Kind of *Prayer*, is a moſt particuler guift of God, which he beſtoweth vpō whome it pleaſeth him. Somtymes, in payment of thoſe ſeruices, which they haue done him; and of the much, which they haue mortified thē-

ſelues,

ſelues, and ſuffered for his loue. And ſometymes agayne, without any relation to any precedent merits of theirs. For, in fine, it is a moſt free, and liberall grace of his owne; and he communicates it, to whome he will, according to that of the Goſpell, *Non licet mihi quod volo facere?* Shall not I perhaps, haue power to diſpoſe of my owne goods, as I liſt? But this Kind of *Prayer*, is not a thing which we are able to teach. *Matt. 20. 15.*

And ſo there are ſome Authors who are reprehended, and euen prohibited, becauſe they would needs teach, that, which could neither be taught, nor learned; and reduce that to Art, which is aboue all art; as if they could infallibly place a man in ſtate of *Contemplation*. Which *Gerſon* doth well reprehēd, in a book which he wrote againſt *Rusbrokius*, in theſe words: *Thou haſte pluckt of the flower, from the roote.* For as the flowers pluckt from the roote, and carried in the hand, do quickly wither, & looſe their beauty; ſo do theſe things, which God communicateth to the ſoule, after an internall manner, in this high Gerſon.

high and rich Kind of *Prayer*. For in procuring to draw them out of that place, and to declare them, and communicate them to others, they looſe their luſtre, and their ſplendor.

And this do they, who will needs declare and teach, that which cannot be declared, no nor ſo much as vnderſtood. Thoſe *Anagogies*, thoſe *Transformations* of the Soule, that ſilence & annihilation, that vnion without *mediũ*, that deepe bottome of *Taulerus*; for what doth it ſerue to ſpeake of theſe things; for if thou vnderſtand them, I do not; nor do I know, what thou wouldeſt ſay. Nay, in this caſe, we are taught, and that very well, that there is this difference, belonging to this diuine *Science*, from others; That before we can attayne to other *Sciences*, we muſt firſt vnderſtand the *Termes*; but in this, thou ſhalt not vnderſtand the *Termes*, till firſt, thou haue attayned to the *Sciẽce*. In other *Sciences*, the *Theorick* doth precede the *Practicke*; but in this, the *Practick* muſt precede the *Theoricke*.

Nay I ſay moreouer, that not only this

this *Prayer* cannot be taught, or declared by words, but not ſo much as your ſelfe are to deſire to rayſe, or place your ſelfe in his kind of *Prayer*, vnleſſe God himſelfe, do raiſe you to it, and place you in it. For this would be a great preſumption and pride; & you ſhould ſo deſerue, to looſe euen that *Prayer*, which you haue already; & ſo remaine voide of all. *Introduxit me in cellam vinariam*, ſayth the *Spouſe* in the *Canticles*. That vocation of God, to draw the ſoule into his ſecret retiring-place, to treat ſo familiarly with it, and the bringing it, into his *Cellar of wyne*, ſo to ſatisfy it, and inebriate it with his loue, is a moſt particuler guifte of God. The *Spouſe*, did not preſume to enter; but her fellow *Spouſe*, tooke her by the hand, and drew her in. That raiſing of ones ſelfe, to the *Kiſſe of his mouth*, is not a thing which thou canſt, or oughteſt pretend, vnleſſe he raiſe thee vp; for it would be a great preſumption. Cant. 2. 4.

And ſo we ſee, that the *Spouſe*, aſpireth not ſo high. She is more baſhfull, & humble then ſo; but ſhe beſeecheth her

her fellow *Spouſe*, that he will vouchſafe to giue her ſuch a *Kiſſe*. *Oſculetur me, oſculo oris ſui*. As if he had ſaid (as *S. Bernard* ſpeaketh) I cannot by any ſtrength of myne owne, arriue to this *Loue*, and to this *Vnion*, and to ſo high *Contemplation*, if he vouchſafe not to giue it. It is he, who by his goodnes & moſt gracious liberality, muſt ſublyme vs, to this *Kiſſe of his mouth*, to this moſt high *Prayer*, and *contemplation*, if he be pleaſed, that we may haue it. This is not any ſuch thing, as that we may preſume to teach it, nor wherein we may, or ought to vndertake.

Cant. 1.1. Bern. ſer. 32. ex paruis.

Chap. V.

How the holy Scripture doth declare to vs, theſe two Kinds of Prayer.

THese two Kinds of *Prayer*, wherof we haue ſpoken, the Holy Ghoſt doth admirably declare, in the 39. Chap. of *Eccleſiaſticus*. He ſayth there, of the *Wiſemã*, which the Church interpreteth by the word *Iuſt*: *Cor ſuum tradet ad vigilandam, diluculo ad Dominum*

Eccleſiaſt. 39.6.

qui

qui fecit illum, & in conſpectu Altiſſimi deprecabitur. He firſt placeth ordinary *Prayer*, by ſaying that a man *riſeth early in the morning*, which is a tyme much celebrated *in Holy Scripture*, as being fit for *Prayer*. *Mane aſtabo tibi. Præueni in maturitate, & clamaui. Præuenerunt oculi mei ad te diluculo, vt meditarer eloquia tua. Ad te de luce vigilo.* He ſayth, *ad vigilandum*; becauſe he goes to be attentiue, and watchfull; not to ſleepe, or to make a kind of a pillow of his *Prayer*. *Cor ſuum tradet*; He deliuereth his hart vp to *Prayer*; He is not there, with his body alone, hauing ſent his hart away, about other buſineſſe, which the *Saints* do call, *Cordis ſomnolentia*. A drowſy & dull hart, is a great impediment to *Prayer*; for it diminiſheth that reuerēce, which is neceſſary for him, who treats with God.

Pſa. 5. 5. Pſa. 118. 147. 148. Pſa. 62. 10

Now what is that which cauſeth this reuerence, in the iuſt perſon? *Ad Dominum, qui fecit illum, & in conſpectu Altiſſimi deprecabitur.* To conſider, that I am in the preſence of God, and that I go to treate with that ſublyme Maieſty; this makes me remaine in *Prayer*, with atten-

attention and reuerence. Let vs now obſerue, what *Prayer* it is, which he makes. *Aperiet os ſuum in oratione, & pro delictis ſuis deprecabitur.* He will open his mouth in *Prayer*, and will begin, deſiring God to pardon his ſinnes; and with being penitent, and confounded for them. This is that *Prayer*, which we, for our parts, are to make; To bewaile out miſeryes and ſinnes, and to beg Gods mercy, and pardon for them. We muſt not content our ſelues to ſay, *I made a generall Confeſsion of my life, at the beginning of my conuerſion, and then I entertayned my ſelfe ſome dayes, in bewailing and repenting my ſelfe of my ſinnes:* For no reaſon will permit, that we ſhould forget our ſinnes, though we haue confeſſed them; but we muſt ſtill procure to carry them before our eyes, according to that of the Prophet, *Et peccatum meum contra me eſt ſemper: and my ſinne is euer before me.*

Pſa. 50. 4.

S. Bernard, vpon theſe wordes, *Lectulus noſter floridus*, ſayth very well. Your bed, which is your hart, is ſtill offenſiue, and of ill ſauour; for you haue not yet taken vtterly away the ill

Bernard ſer. 46. ſuper Cant. 3. 15.

ill ſmell of thoſe vices, and vnmortifyed affections, which you brought from the world. And will you then preſume, to inuite the *Spouſe*, to repoſe in it? And dare you treate of other higher exerciſes of *Loue*, and *vnion* with Almighty God, as if you were already *perfect*? Deale firſt, in clearing, and waſhing well your bed with tears; *Lauabo per ſingulos noctes lectum meam, lachrymis meis ſtratum meum rigabo*; And then be diligēt, in adorning that bed of yours, with the flowers of *vertues*, and ſo you may induce the *Spouſe* to come to it, as the *Spouſe* in the *Canticles*, inuited hers. Deale firſt about the *Kiſſe of his feete*, by humbling your ſelfe, and by much lamenting your ſinnes; and then about a *Kiſſe of his hands*, which is, by offering good workes to God, and by procuring to receaue from his holy *hands*, all true and ſolide vertue. And as for that third *Kiſſe of his mouth*, which is that moſt high *Vnion*, leaue that for ſuch tyme, as when our Lord ſhall vouchſafe to raiſe you to it.

Nota.

Pſa. 6.7.

It is related of a very ſpirituall *Father*, that he remained twenty years, in the

Doctour Aracz. the practiſe, and exerciſes of the *Purgatiue way*; but we do inſtantly growe weary, & wilbe riſing vp in all haſt, to that *Kiſſe of the mouth*, & to the Exerciſes of the *Loue* of God. A body had need of a deep foundation, for the raiſing of ſo high a building. And moreouer, here is, in the *Exerciſes* of the *Purgatiue way* (beſides many other helpes & benefits, wherof we ſhall ſpeake afterward) this one, of being a great remedy, and a medicine very preſeruatiue, againſt falling into ſinne. For he who goeth cõtinually in actuall deteſtation of him, and in being wounded & confounded, for hauing offended Almighty God, in tyme paſt; wilbe very far, from committing new ſinnes in the preſent tyme. And on the contrary part, the *Saints* haue obſerued, and deliuered vnto vs, that the cauſe why ſome haue fallen, who ſeemed to haue beene very ſpirituall, & men of *Prayer*, and peraduenture were ſo indeed, hath beene for want of this *Exerciſe:* and becauſe they gaue themſelues in ſuch ſort, to others, and to certayne ſweet and guſtfull conſiderations, that they forgot

Tract.8.c. 21.& p.2. Tract.7.c. 4.

Note.

got the Exercise *of the knowledge of themselues*, and the consideration of their sinnes, and so they came to be to secure, & not to be so wary, and timerous, as they ought; and by these degres, they came to fall. Because they forgot so soone, their owne baseness, they fell from that height, where they conceyued themselues to be. It will therefore be fit for vs, that our *Prayer* be imploied for longe tyme, in the bewayling of our sinnes, as the *Wiseman* sayth; till our Lord reach vs forth his hand, and say to vs, *Amice, ascende superius.* Luc. 14. 10.

Let vs now cast an eye, to see what kind of thing, that high, and most excellent *Prayer* is, which our Lord doth giue, when he is pleased. The *Wiseman* sayth presently, *Si enim magnus Dominus voluerit, spiritu intelligentiæ replebit illum.* If he will (for this is no right of inheritance, but a grace which is meerly gracious, & of great liberality) thou shalt be sometymes in *Prayer*, & it wil happen to thee, to haue a beame come from heauen, and a flash of lightning, wherby thou art shewed the way to vnderstand things *truely*; & thou doest Eccl. 39. 8.

grow to prize, and value that which before thou dideſt not vnderſtād. This is the guift of *Prayer*. How often had you paſſed ſuch, or ſuch a Truth, and neuer reflected vpon it, as then you do. The holy Scripture calls it, *a Spirit of Intelligence*, becauſe it ſeemeth to conſiſt, but of one *ſingle, and ſimple apprehenſion*; ſo quiet, and ſetled is a man, with ſuch a light as this. It happens to one heere, as when he chaūceth vpon ſome exquiſite, and curious Picture, to be looking vpon it long togeather, without ſtirring ſo much as an eye, & without any diſcourſe of mind; but with a guſte, with a ſuſpenſion, and with a great admiration, and the eye is neuer ſatisfyed with beholding it. Of this ſort is this kind of *Prayer*, and this high ſublime *Contemplation*. Or, to ſay better, this *Conteplation*, hath ſomewhat of the māner of that, which the glorious ſoules inioy in heauen, by *the viſion of God*.

The felicity of glorious ſoules, cōſiſteth in the *Viſion* and *Contemplation* of God; and in heauen we ſhalbe all abſorpt, and ouerflowed by ſeeing, and louing God, for all eternity, with one ſimple

ſimple *Viſion* of that Maieſty, enioying his preſence, and his glory without vſe of diſcourſe, and without being euer weary of beholding him. Nay for euer; that *Song* of ours, and that diuine *Manna*, willbe new vnto vs; and ſtill we ſhalbe taken, as it were, with new admiration. In this very manner, is that high and perfect *Prayer*, which is called *Contemplation*, whē our Lord is pleaſed to beſtow it. For the man is neuer ſatisfyed with beholding and contemplating God, & without any diſcourſe or wearineſſe, but onely with one ſimple ſight.

The Scripture ſayth, *Replebit illum*, becauſe this grace is ſo copious, and ſuperabundant, that it ouerflowes, and cannot be comprehended, in ſuch a ſmall veſſell. And it addeth inſtantly, that which followeth vpon this, *Et ipſe tanquam imbres, mittet eloquia ſapientiæ ſuæ; & in oratione confitebitur Domino*. From hence grow inſtantly, thoſe *Colloquiums* with God. This is the proper tyme, for treating with his diuine Maieſty, when the ſoule is moued, and inſtructed, and ſublymed, by that celeſtiall

Eccl. 15. 3.

Note.

light, and wiſdome. And ſo *B. Fa. Ignatius* ſayth, that this is the time, when the *Colloquiums* are beſt made, *Occurrente nobis ſpirituali motu, ad Colloquia veniamus.* Let that word be well noted. When firſt we haue holpen our ſelues, by the diſcourſe of the powers of our mind, in *Meditation*, and *conſideration* of the *miſtery*; and when that *Meditation*, is growen already to haue inflamed our hart; and when we find our ſelues throughly moued to it; then is the tyme of *Colloquium*, and of familiar treaty with Almighty God, and of our ſuits, & negotiatiõs with him. For the *Prayer* which ſpringeth from that hart, which alreadỹ is touched by Almighty God, is the *Prayer* which he heares; and which findes a good diſpatch, at the hands of his maieſty. For as *S. Auguſtine* ſayth, *When God moueth a man to aske any thing of him, it is an euident ſigne, that he meanes to grant that which is asked.* This is that moſt excellent *Prayer*, which God giueth to whomc he will. *Si enim Dominus magnus voluerit, ſpiritu intelligentia replebit illum.* If our Lord, who is great, & powerfull, will; we may eaſily vſe this high,

P. N. Ignatius lib. Exercit. ſpiris. in repetit. 1. & 2. Exercit. primæ hebdomadæ.

Aug. de verbis Dom. ſer. 88 & 29.

high, & aduantagious kind of Prayer.

But if our Lord will not be pleased, to raise vs vp to so high *Prayer* as this, we must not (sayth *S. Bernard*) afflict our selues, or be dismaid; but we must be well contented to liue in the exercise of vertue, and with the happinesse of being conserued by our Lord, in his friendship, and grace; and in that he suffer vs not, to fall into sinne. *Vtinam detur mihi pax, bonitas, gaudium in spiritu Sancto; misereri in hilaritate; tribuere in simplicitate; gaudere cum gaudentibus; flere cum flentibus, & his contentus ero.* I would to God, our Lord were pleased to giue me peace, goodnes, ioy in the holy Ghost; mercy, simplicity, and charity with my neighbours, for with this would I content my selfe. *Cætera sanctis Apostolis, viriſq; Apostolicis derelinquo.* Those other high Contemplations, I leaue to the Apostles and Apostolicall men: *Montes excelsi ceruis, petra refugium herinacijs.* Those high mountaines of contemplatiõ, let them be for such as do, with the swiftnesse of Harts and Roes, runne at full speede to perfection; I, who am no better then a

Note.

Bern. ser. 46. super Cant.

Ps. 103. 18.

1. *Cor. 16. 4.*

meere *hedg-hog*, full of faults and sinnes, will betake my selfe to the holes, and concauities of that *Rocke*, which is Christ our Lord; to hide my selfe in his wounds, and to wash away my faults, and sinnes, with the bloude which floweth out from thence; and this shalbe my kind of *Prayer*.

But now, if the glorious *S. Bernard* content himselfe with the only exercise of vertue, and with griefe & contrition for sinne, and do leaue this other most excellent *Prayer* for Apostolicall mẽ, & for those great *Saints*, to whome our Lord is pleased to communicate the same; it wilbe agreable to all reason, that we also be content therewith; and that this be our exercise in *Prayer*, to be wounded with griefe, and confounded with the shame of our sinnes; and to attend to the mortification of our passions; and to the rooting vp of vice, and vicious inclinations; and to ouercome all repugnances, & difficultyes, which may offer themselues to vs, as impediments in the way of vertue. And as for that other most excellent, and most aduantagious kind of

Prayer,

Prayer, let vs leaue it, till ſuch tyme as our Lord may be pleaſed to call, and raiſe vs to it.

Yea, and alſo euen then, when we conceiue our ſelues to be called to it, we had need to very cautelous, & well aduiſed; for in this there hath beene much abuſe, and errour. Sometimes a man will thinke that God doth call him to this *Prayer*, by, I know not what kind of delight, and ſweetnes, or facility, which he findes in the exerciſe of *the loue of God*; whereas indeed, God doth not call him to it; but it is the man himſelfe, who mounts, and will needs intrude himſelfe, becauſe the diuell deceaues, & blindes him, to the end that he may leaue the deſire of obtayning that, whereof he hath moſt need, and ſo, vpon the whole matter, he may do nothing, and neither profit in the one, nor other kind. There is a great maiſter of ſpirit, who ſayth thus very well. As a Man would ſhewe himſelfe to be of little wiſdome, if he, whome the King had commaunded to aſſiſt and ſerue him at his table, ſhould preſumptuouſly ſit downe at the ſame

Note.

Bloſius in ſpeculo ſpiritu. cap. 11.

table, without the commaundment, or
» ſo much as leaue of the King; ſo doth
» he very ill, and indiſcreetly, who deli-
» uereth himſelfe all ouer, to the ſweete
» & delightfull reſt of *Contemplation*, not
» being euidently called to the ſame, by
» God himſelfe. And *S. Bonauenture*, doth herein giue an excellent good aduice, and ſayth: Let a man exerciſe himſelfe in that which is profitable and ſecure; which is, in extirpating of vices, and ill diſpoſitions, and in acquiring true and ſolide vertue. For this is a very playne and ſafe way, wherein there can be no deceit; but ſo much the more, as one ſhall endeauour to perfect himſelfe in mortification, humiliation, and reſignation, ſo much the more ſhall he pleaſe God, and deſerue more in his ſight. And as for theſe other exquiſite and extraordinary wayes, there are (ſaith *S. Bonauenture*) may errours committed, and many illuſions of the diuell imbraced by occaſion thereof. For, many tymes, one thinks, that, to be of God, which is not of God; and that, to be ſome great matter, which is nothing; and therefore theſe latter, are to be examined

Bonauent. de proceſſu religionis. c. 20.

mined by thoſe former; and not thoſe, by theſe. This is the generall doctrine of the *Saints*, as ſhortly we ſhall ſee.

Chap. VI.

In which the ſame doctrine, is more declared and confirmed.

For the better declaration, & confirmation of this Doctrine, the Saints, and Maiſters of ſpirituall life do heere obſerue, That for the obtayning of this *Prayer*, and high *Contemplation*, wherof we haue ſpoken, there is need of great mortification of our paſſions; and that a man be very well grounded in the mortal vertues; and that he exerciſe himſelfe long in them; & if not, they ſay it is in vayne, for a man to pretend to enter into *Contemplation*, & to make profeſſion therof. *Oportet* (ſay they) *vt prius ſis Iacob luctans, quàm Iſrael Deum videns, ac dicens, Vidi Deum facie ad faciam. It will firſt, be neceſsary, that thou be a ſtrong, and ſtoute wraſtler, and that thou ouercome thy paſsions, and perterſe inclinations if thou deſire to arriue to that intimate vnion, with Almighty God. Bloſius* ſayth, that

Greg. li. 7. mor. c. 27. Bern. ſer. 46. ſuper Cant. Iſidor. li. 3. ca. 25. S. Tho. 1. 2. 184. art. 3. & Caiet. in Gen. 32. 30.

Bloſius in tabula ſpirituali. addit. 1.

that he who pretends to attiue to ſome very eminent degree of diuine loue, & yet procureth not, with great diligence, to correct and mortifie his vices, and to driue from himſelfe, all inordinate loue of creatures, is like a man, who being loaden with leade, & iron, and withall being bound, hand, and foote, will yet needs clyme vp, to ſome very high tree.

And therefore they aduiſe ſuch as are *Maiſters* in matter of *ſpirit*, that before they treate of *Contemplation* with them whome they inſtruct, they muſt treate of thé way, how to mortify all their paſſions very well; and how to acquire the habits of Vertue, of Patience, of Humility, of Obedience; and that they exerciſe themſelues much herein. This they call the *Actiue Life*, which muſt go before the *Contemplatiue*. And for want of this methode, many, who would not walke by theſe ſteps, but would needs peruert the order, and clyme vp eaſily to *Contemplation*, do find themſelues, after many years of *Prayer*, to be very voide of *vertue*, and to be *impatient*, *hayſh*, and *proude*;

proude; and that if you touch them a little in this Kind, they are ready, through impatience, to breake out into passionate words, wherby they well discouer their imperfection & immortification.

This is very well declared by our Father *Generall*, *Euerardus Mercurianus*, in a letter which he wrote about this subiect, in these words: Many who did more want discretion, then abound with true desire of proceeding, in the way of spirit, hauing heard that there is another more high exercise of *Prayer*, of *the loue of God*, of certaine *Anagogicall Acts*, and of I knowe not what kind of *Silence*; would needs mount vp to the Exercise of the vnitiue way, before their tyme; hauing heard men say, that this Exercise was more heroicall and perfect; and that Vice, is better ouercome therby, and Vertue also obteyned more easily, and more sweetely. And because they rose to this, before their time, they lost much time; and made no way; and at the end of many yeares, they found themselues as quick in their passions, and vnchanged in

Euerardus Mercurianus.

» their ill affections; & as great friends of
» delight, and eaſe, as if they had neuer
» entred into any conuerſation, or com-
» munication with almighty God. And
» they haue beene as ſtiffe, in purſuite of
» their owne will, and as hardly haue
» beene drawne, to ſubmit their iudg-
» ment, when their Superiors were min-
» ded to diſpoſe of them, contrary to
» their owne liking and dictamen, as if
» it had beene the firſt day. And the rea-
» ſon of this is, becauſe they would needs
» fly, before they had wings; and they
» would needs find out certaine neere
» ways, and would not walke by the
» ſteps which they were to tread. They
» would not ground themſelues firſt, in
» mortification, nor in the practiſe of
» vertue; and ſo it is no maruell, if with-
» out a foundation, they could not raiſe
» a good houſe. They built vpon ſand,
» and ſo they haue failed, when there
» was moſt need.

To the end that it may appeare, how true, and vniuerſall this doctrine is, you ſhall vnderſtād, that this which here I haue deliuered, is vſually taught by holy writers, when they ſpeake of three

three parts, or three kindes of *Prayer*, according to those three Wayes, which they call *Purgatiue, Illuminatiue, & Vnitiue*. Which is a doctrine, drawne out of *Dionysius* the *Areopagite*; & from him it was taken by *S. Gregory Nazianzen.* and by all the rest of them, who haue treated of spirituall matters. They say, and they all agree in this, That before there be any treating of this high, and most complete kind of *Prayer*, which carrieth correspondence with the *Vnitiue Way*, we are euer to handle that, which belongeth to the *Purgatiue*, & *Illuminatiue Way*. It is necessary for vs first, to exercise our selues in griefe, & repentance for our sinnes; and in rooting vp our vices, & ill affections; & in acquiring of true *Vertues*, by imitating Christ our Lord, in whom they shine. If we should passe forward, without this, we should go on, without a ground, and so at last, we should faile, like him who would needs passe vp to the highest *Classe* in learning, without hauing grounded himselfe in the lowest; or who would clyme as high as the last step of the ladder, without tou-

Dionysius Areopagita. Gregory Nazianzen.

touching vpon the first.

CHAP. VII.

Of the ordinary Kind of Mentall Prayer.

LAYING aside, that particuler, and extraordinary Kinde of *Prayer*, since we cannot reach it, nor declare what it is, nor in what manner it growes, neither is it in our power to compasse it, nor doth God command vs to attaine it, nor shall we yeild any accompte to him, for the want therof: we will now fall to treate of that ordinary kind of *Mentall Prayer*, which may, in some sort, be taught, and obteyned by indeauour, and aduise, being first assisted therein, by the grace of our Lord.

Amongst other fauours, and benefits which our Lord hath done to the *Society*, this hath beene a very great one, that he hath giuen vs, the kind of *Prayer*, which we are to hold, approued by the *Sea Apostolicke*, in that

booke of the *Spirituall Exercises*, composed by our *B. F. Ignatius*, as appeares by that *Breue*, which is placed in the beginning of the said booke. Wherein *Pope Paul* the third (after he had caused them to be examined, with great exactnesse) doth approue and confirme them; declaring them to be very profitable, and vsefull; and he much exhorteth all faythfull Christians to exercise themselues therein.

Libro de los Exercitios espirituales de N. B. P. Ignatio approbado.

Our Lord God, did communicate this Kind of Prayer to our *B. Father*; and he communicated the same to vs, who are of the same *Order*, which our Lord had communicated to him. And so we are, to haue greate confidence in God, that by this way and meanes, which he hath found out for vs, he will help vs, and do vs fauour; since herby, he gayned our *B. Father*, and his companions; and since that tyme, many others. And there, did our Lord communicate, the way and trace of the *Society*, to our *B. Father*, as himselfe said; and we are not to seeke out other ways of *Prayer*, which are extraordinary; but to procure to

mould

mould our ſelues, according to that forme, which we haue, from him, like vnto his true, and lawfull Children.

Note. In this Exerciſe *of the three Powers*, which is the firſt of the Exerciſe; our *B. Father* doth teach the manner, which is to be held in *Prayer*, throughout all the reſt of the *Exerciſes*. And it is, that whatſoeuer point we ſhall take in hand, we muſt go exerciſing the *three powers of our ſoule*, the *Memory*, the *Vnderſtanding*, and the *Will*. The memory, is firſt to place before the eyes of our *vnderſtanding*, that *point*, or *myſtery*, vpon which we meane to *pray*. Then we enter with our *vnderſtanding*, diſcourſing, meditating, & conſidering thoſe things, which may helpe vs moſt, towards the mouing of our *Will*; & then laſtly the affections of the ſame *Will*, muſt follow. Now this *third*, is the principall thing, wherupon we are to ſtay. For this, is the end of the *Meditation*, and the *Fruite*, which muſt be drawen, out of all thoſe conſiderations, and diſcourſes of the *Vnderſtanding*. All I this ſay muſt be ordained, to

mouethe *Will*, to a deſire of that which is good, & a deteſtation of that which is bad. And therfore, is the name of *the three Powers*, giuen to this firſt *Exerciſe*, becauſe it is the firſt, wherein this manner of *Prayer* is taught; for otherwiſe, theſe *three Powers of the ſoule*, are to be imployed in all the other *Exerciſes* following, as well as in this.

This kind of *Prayer*, which here our *B. Father* teacheth, and which the *Society* vſeth, is not ſubiect to any ſingularity, nor hath it any thing in it, which may carry any proportion to illuſions, as ſome others haue. But it is a Kind, which is very playne, and much vſed by the ancient Fathers, & very conforme to mans nature, which is diſcurſiue, and rationall, and which gouernes it ſelfe by reaſon; and is perſwaded, conuinced, and ſubdued by it; and conſequently it is moſt eaſy, moſt fruitfull, and moſt ſafe. So that we are not to remaine in our *Prayer*, like perſons who had giuen ouer our ſelues; or as if we were extraordinarily illuminated, without doing any thing on our part, for this would be a great

errour and abuſe: But we are to call vpon God, by meanes of the *Exerciſe of our powers*, and we are gently, to cooperate with him; becauſe God is pleaſed, to require the cooperation of his creatures; & this is that, which our *B. Father* teacheth vs, in his booke of the *ſpirituall Exerciſes*.

Thoſe other kinds of *Prayer*, which take away all diſcourſe, and which vſe certaine *negations*, with certaine *ſilences*, and are taken out of *Myſticall Theology*, are not vſually to be taught, no nor ſo much as to be ſought, as was ſaid before. And new beginners who haue not proceeded far, in the knowledge of their *Paſsions*, and in the practiſe of *Vertue*, being directed into theſe particuler ways, are made ſubiect to illuſions, and deceytes. And when they thinke they haue gayned much vpon themſelues, they find by experience, that all their paſſions remaine entire, which by meanes of that ſweet bayte, and guſte of *Prayer*, lay a while, as if they had beene aſleepe, but afterward they awake, with much danger to the owners. Beſides, that

Cap. 4. & 6.

by

by theſe particuler, and ſingular kindes of *Prayer*, there is created in men, a kind of ſtiffnes, and cloſnes to their owne Iudgment, which is a great diſpoſition, towards a mans being deceiued. And therefore our *B. F. Ignatius*, did apprehend it much; and he ſaid, that ordinarily, ſuch perſons haue a touch of this.

I ſay therefore, that the *firſt thing* which we are to do in *Prayer*, in any *Pointe* which we ſhall take in hand, muſt be to place, before our *memory*, that *point*, or *myſtery*, vpon which we meane to make our *Prayer*; then we muſt enter into *Meditation*, by diſcourſing with the *Vnderſtanding*, vpon the particularityes of that *myſtery*, & then come in, the affects of the *Will*. So that the Memory firſt propounds, & then inſtantly enters Diſcourſe, and *Meditation* of the *Vnderſtanding*; for this is the ground, from whence all thoſe acts & Exerciſes, are to flowe, which we produce in *Prayer*; and in the vertue and ſtrength of this, all the reſt is performed.

Now the reaſon of this is cleere, in

good *Philoſophy*. For our *Will* is a blind kind of *Power*, which cannot ſtir a foote, vnleſſe it be guided by the *Vnderſtanding*. *Nihil volitum, niſi præcognitum.* This is a common maxime of the *Philoſophers*, The *Will* cannot deſire that thing, which hath not already paſſed by the *Vnderſtanding*; which is as the *Page* with a torch in his hand, who goes before, to giue light to the *Will*, & guides it, and diſcouereth to it, what it is to *loue*, or what to hate. And ſo *S. Auguſtine* ſayth, *Inuiſa diligi poſſe, incognita nequaquam.* And *S. Gregory* ſayth: *Nemo poteſt diligere, quod prorſus ignorat.* Well may we *loue* the thing we haue not *ſeene*, but that wherof we haue no *Knowledge*, we cannot *loue*; For the obiect of our *Will*, is *ſome Good apprehended*, or *vnderſtood*. For therfore, do we like, or *loue* any thing, becauſe *we apprehēd it as good*, & worthy to be loued; and on the other ſide, we do therfore abhor, and fly from any thing, as iudging and apprehending it to be ill, & worthy to be abhorred. And ſo, when we deſire, that any man ſhould change his will, and purpoſe, we perſwade him

Note.

Aug. li. 10. de Tri. c. 1.

Greg. ho. 36. ſuper Euangel.

him with reaſon, and we procure to conuince his *Vnderſtanding*, that the thing which he deſires, is not conuenient, nor good; and that the other thing is better, and more conuenient; that ſo he may forſake the one, and imbrace the other. So that the act, & diſcourſe of the *Vnderſtanding*, is the foundation & ground, of thoſe other acts, and *Exerciſes*, which we make in *Prayer*; and therfore is *Meditation* ſo neceſſary. Which point we will declare yet further, in the Chapters following.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the neceſsity of Meditation.

HVGO of *S. Victor* ſayth, that *Prayer* cannot be perfect, if *Meditation* do not eyther go before it, or with it. And this is alſo the doctrine of *S. Auguſtine*, who ſayth, That *Prayer* without Meditation, is but a tepide kind of thing. This they proue very well; for if a man do not exerciſe himſelfe in knowing, and conſidering his miſery, and weakeneſſe, he will go in

Hugo de Sancto Vict. tra. de laude orationis.

Auguſtin.

errour, and will not be able to aske in *Prayer*, that which is fitteſt for him; & when he asketh, it will not be with ſuch feruour, as were conuenient. There are many, who, by reaſon that they know not themſelues, & conſider not their faults, do go on, in the wrong way, and do preſume of themſelues in certaine things, which they would not do, if they knew themſelues; & ſo they treate in their *Prayer*, about certaine things, which are very different from thoſe, wherof they haue moſt need. If therfore you will know how to pray, and to beg of God, what is fit for you, ſee you exerciſe your ſelues, in the conſideratiō of your owne faults, & frailtyes. And by this meanes you ſhall know what to aske; and by vnderſtanding, and conſidering your great neceſſity, you will aske it with feruour, and as you ought, as poore needy beggers vſe to do, who, well know, and feele their neceſſity and miſery.

Bern. ſer. 2. de ſancto Andrea. *S. Bernard*, (treating thus, that we are not to go flying, but walking towards perfection, *Nemo repente fit ſummus*,

mus; ascendendo non volando, apprehenditur summitas scalæ,) sayth, That we walking, and rising towards perfection, are to be vpon these two feete, *Meditation* and *Prayer*. *Ascendamus igitur, velut duobus quibusdam pedibus, Meditatione & Oratione; Meditatio siquidem docet, quid desit; Oratio, ne desit, obtinet.* For meditation points vs to what we want, and Prayer preuailes ro obteyne it; *Illa viam ostendit, ista deducit.* Meditation shewes vs the way, and Prayer guides vs in it. *Meditatione denique, agnoscimus imminentia nobis pericula, oratione euadimus.* Finally, by meditation we know the daungers which threaten vs, and by Prayer we escape and free our selues. From hence it is, that *S. Augustine* sayth, that Meditation is the beginning of all good. *Intellectus cogitabundus, est principium omnis boni.* For he who considers how good God is in himselfe; and how good & mercifull he hath beene to vs; how much he hath loued vs; how much he hath done, and how much he hath suffered for vs; will quickly enkindle himselfe, in the loue of so good a Lord. And he that considers well,

Augustin.

Note.

his owne faults, & miſeries, will ſoone growe humble, and hold himſelfe, in ſmall accompt. And he that conſiders, how ill he hath ſerued God, and how grieuouſly he hath offended him; will eſteeme himſelfe worthy of the greateſt puniſhment. And thus, by *Meditation*, we grow to enrich our ſoules, with all vertue.

For this cauſe, doth the holy Scripture recommend *Meditation* ſo much to vs. *Bleſſed is the man, who meditates day and night, in the law of our Lord*, ſayth the Prophet *Dauid*. *Et erit tanquam lignum, quod plantatum eſt ſecus decurſus aquarum, quod fructum ſuum dabit in tempore ſuo.* Such a man as this, is like a tree, planted neere to the ſtreames of water, which will giue much fruite. *Beati qui ſcrutantur teſtimonia eius, in toto corde exquirunt eum.* Theſe are the men, who ſeeke God with their whole hart; and this is that, which makes them ſeeke him. And this is alſo that, which the Prophet begged of God, towardes the keeping of his law, *Da mihi intellectum & ſcrutabor legem tuam, & cuſtodiam illam in toto corde meo.* And on the contrary ſide, he

Pſa. 1. 3.

Pſa. 118. 2.

Pſa. 118. 34.

he sayth. *Nisi quod lex tua meditatio mea est, tunc forte perysſem in humilitate mea.* If it had not been, that my vsuall meditation was vpon the law, perhaps I had perished in my humility; that is in my *difficulties*, as *S. Hierome* shewes. Psa. 118. 92. Hierome.

And so one of the greatest prayses, which the Saints ascribe to *Meditation*, and Consideration, or rather the greatest of them all, is this, That it is a great helper on to all vertue. *Soror lectionis, nutrix orationis, directrix operis, omniumq; pariter perfectio, & consummatrix existens.* Gerson.

By one contrary, a man comes to know the other best. One of the principall causes, of all those mischiefs which are in the world, is want of *Consideration*, according to that of the Prophet *Ieremias*, *Desolatione desolata est omnis terra, quia nullus est qui recogitat corde.* The cause why the whole earth is in such spirituall desolation, and that there are in it so many sinns, is because there is scarce any one, who entreth into himselfe, and maketh it his business to meditate, and reuolue the mysteries of God in his hart. For who is Ier. 12. 11.

he

he that would presume to commit a mortall him, if he considered that God died for sinne? And that it is so great an euill, as that it was necessary that God, should become man, to the end, that he might satisfy for it, according to the rigor of Iustice? Who would presume to sinne, if he considered that for one mortall sinne, God punisheth a man with Hell-fire, and that for euer? If men would put themselnes to thinke, and to ponder well that worde, *Discedite à me; maledicti, in ignem æternum*, that same *Eternity*, that *foreuer, without all end*; and that *as long as God shalbe God, he is to burne in the fire of Hell*, what man is that, who in exchange of a momentary delighte, would make choice to imbrace such eternall torment?

Mat. 25. 41

S. Thomas of Aquine, was wont to say, that it was past his vnderstanding, how it was possible, that a man liuing in mortall sinne, could tell how to laugh, or take any contentment. And he had great reason to say so. For that sinner, knowes for certayne, both that if he should then dy, he should go instantly, and for euer remaine in Hell,

In hist. Ordin. S. Dominici. p. 1. li. 3. c. 37.

Note.

and

and withall, that he hath not any ſecurity of continuing in his life, one moment. There was one who had entertained himſelfe in banquets, and in choice muſicke, and in all kinde of ioylity; but becauſe a naked ſword was placed ouer his head, hanging vp, but by a ſingle thred, he grew all into trembling for feare, of whē the ſword might fall; & nothing could giue him guſte. What then ſhall become of him, who is threatned, not only with temporall, but eternall death, which dependeth vpon a little-little thred of life? Since a man dyes ſuddenly ſometymes, & at an inſtant; & he goes well to bed, and the firſt tyme he awakes, is to ſee himſelfe in the flames of hell.

Damocles apud Cicer. Tuſc. 5.

A good ſeruant of God, was wont to ſay to this purpoſe, That in his opinion, there were to be but two kindes of priſons, in any Chriſtian Common wealth. The one of the *Inquiſition*, the other for *Mad-men*. For eyther a man believes, that there is a *Hell*, made for ſuch as ſin, or no. If he believe not this, let him be caried to the *Inquiſition*, for an *Hereticke*. If he believe

Note.

it, and yet ne uertheleſſe will remaine in mortall ſinne; let him be carried to the houſe of *Mad-men*; for what greater madneſſe can there be, then this?

There is no doubt, but that if ſeriouſly men conſidered this, it would be a ſtrong bridle to reſtrayne them from ſinne. And for the ſame reaſon, doth the diuell procure, with ſo much diligence, to hinder vs from this *Conſideration*, and *Meditation*. The firſt thing that the *Philiſtines* did to *Sampſon*, when they had taken him, was to pluck out his eyes; and ſo, this is the firſt thing which the diuell procures to do, to a ſinner. Since he cannot take his *Fayth* from him, he procures that he may beliue, as if he beliued not. *Vt videntes non videant, & audientes non audiant, neque intelligant.* He procures that a man may not conſider that, which he beliues, nor reflect vpon it, any more then if he beliued it not. He bindes vp his eyes; which comes to the ſame reckoning for him, as if he were blind. For as it ſerues to no purpoſe for a man to open his eyes when he is in the darke, becauſe he ſhalbe able to ſee nothing;

Iud.16. 21

Matt.13. 13.

ſo

ſo (as *S. Auguſtine* ſayth) it will profit thee nothing, to be in the light, if thine eyes be ſhut; for ſuch a one will ſee as little, as that other. For this it is, that *Meditation*, and *Mentall Prayer*, is of ſo much importance, becauſe it opens our eyes. *Aug. in Pſal. 25. prope fi-nem.*

Chap. IX.

Of the great Benefit and Profit, which we are to draw from Meditation; *and how we are to vſe it, to the end to profit by it.*

IT will be of great profit to vs, that in tyme of *Prayer*, we exerciſe our ſelues, in the affects and deſires of our *Will*, of which part we ſhall ſhortly treat. But it is very needfull withall, that theſe affects and deſires, go very well grounded in reaſon, and in truth; becauſe man is a rationall creature, and will be guided by reaſon, & by the way of *Vnderſtanding*. And therefore, one of the principall things, to which we muſt ordayne, and addreſſe *Meditation*, muſt be, that we may remaine very ſoundly *vnbeguiled*, and fully poſſeſſed, with the knowledge of thoſe things, which Note.

which are really true; and perfectly conuinced, and reſolued, concerning what is beſt for vs. We vſe to ſay, when one is reduced to leade an orderly and good life, that he is *vnbeguiled*. This *vnbeguiling*, is therefore to be one of the principall fruites, which we muſt procure to gather from *Prayer*. And this point, muſt be much noted, becauſe it is of very great importance, in this matter. And eſpecially, in the beginning of a ſpirituall life, it is neceſſary that a man exerciſe himſelfe much in this; to the end that he may go on, well grounded, and poſſeſſed, with a firme beliefe of things, which really are true.

To the end, that we may better draw this benefit from *Meditation*, and that it may be of much profit to vs, it wilbe neceſſary that it be not ſuperficially, nor curſorily made; nor yet after a dull, and dead faſhion; but with life, and with much attention, and reſt of mind. You are to *Meditate*, & conſider at large, and with great quietnes, the ſhortnes and frailty of this life; the vanity of the things of this world; & how

how the arriuall of death, makes an end of them all; that so you may despise all worldly things, and place your whole harte, vpon that which is to last for euer. You are to consider, and ponder often, what a vaine, and idle thing, the estimation and opinion of men is, which maketh such fierce war vpon vs. For it neither giues any thing to you, nor takes any thing from you, nor can it make you, a whit better, or worse. Grow you thus to despise it, & make no reckoning at all therof. And the same, is to be done in the rest. And by this meanes, a man goes *Vnbeguiling* himselfe, by little and little; and to be conuinced, and resolued vpon that which is for his good; & he groweth thus to become a spirituall man. *Sedebit solitarius, & tacebit; quia leuauit se super se.* Thren. 3. 28. He goeth lifting himselfe aboue himselfe; and is procuring to haue a hart truly generous, which despiseth all things of this world; and he growes to say with *S. Paul, Propter quem, omnia detrimentum feci, & arbitror vt stercora, vt Christum lucrifaciam.* That which before I held for gaine, I now hold for Phil. 3.

losse;

losse; yea and euen for dung, that I may gaine Christ our Lord.

Note. There is a great deale of difference betweene *Meditating* and *Meditating*, & betweene *knowing* and *knowing*. For the wise man, knoweth a thing after one fashion; and the simple and ignorant man, after another. The wise man knoweth it, as it is indeed; but the simple man knoweth only the exterior, and apparence thereof. If an ignorant person find a pretious stone, he likes it for the splendor, and exterior beauty therof, and for nothing els, because he knoweth not the value of it. But the wise *Lapidary*, when he meeteth with such a one, he desires it much; not only for the splendor, and exterior beauty, but because he well vnderstandeth the value, and vertue therof. Now this is the very difference, betweene him who knowes how to *Meditate*, & consider spirituall things, and diuine mysteries; and him who knowes it not. For this later kinde of man, doth but looke vpon things superficially, and as it were vpon the skinne; and although he like them well, for the lustre and splen-

ſplendor, which he diſcerneth there, yet he is not much taken, with a true deſire therof. Wheras he who knoweth how to *Meditate*, and ponder theſe things well, growes *vnbeguiled*, and well reſolued. For knowing the true value of the *treaſure* which is hidden, and of this *pretious pearle*, which at the laſt, he hath found; he deſpiſeth all the reſt, in compariſon therof. *Abijt, & vendidit omnia, quæ habuit, & emit eam.* Matt. 13. 46.

This difference, doth Chriſt our Lord declare to vs, in the holy *Goſpell*, in the hiſtory of that *woman*, who was ſubiect *to a bloudy fluxe*. The holy Euangeliſts do relate, how the Redemer of the world, going to reuiue, and recouer that Daughter of the *Prince of the Sinagogue*, there went ſo much people, as to make a preſſe about him. A certaine woman ſawe him paſſe, who had beene ſubiect *to a bloudy fluxe twelue yeares*, and ſhe had waſted all her goods vpon *Phiſitians*, and gotten no health, in exchange, but rather grewe worſe and worſe. And with a deſire which ſhe had, to recouer health, ſhe braken through the middeſt of that people, &c. Matt. 9. 20. Luc. 8. 43.

with great confidence, and ſayth, ſaid within herſelfe; *Si tetigero tantùm veſtimentum eius, ſalua ero.* If I can but touch the skirt of his garment, I am ſafe. She approacheth, ſhe toucheth, & inſtantly that ſpring of bloud was dryed vp. Chriſt our Lord, lookes backe, and ſayth, *Quis me tetigit? Who is that, which hath touched me? S. Peter,* and the reſt of the diſciples, anſwered; *Præceptor, turbæ te comprimunt, & affligunt, & dicis, quis me tetigit?* Maiſter the troopes preſſe vpon you, and do you ſay, who hath touched me? *Tetigit me aliquis, nam & ego noui virtutem de me exiiſſe.* I meane not ſo, ſayth Chriſt our Lord; but I meane, that ſome body hath touched me, not after the faſhion of other folkes; but in a more particuler manner; *For I find that Vertue is gone out of me.*

Yea, that indeed was the buſineſſe; this was indeed, to touch Chriſt our Lord; and this is that, of which he asked. For as for the other kind of touching by chance, and in that vulgar manner, there is no great account to be made therof. Heere then conſiſts, all the ſubſtance of the matter, *in touching*

Chriſt

Christ our Lord, and his holy myſteries, in ſuch ſorte, as that we may feele the fruite, and vertue of it, in our ſelues. And for this purpoſe, it importeth much, that we go to our *Meditation* with attention, and that we ruminate, and take things in ſunder, at good leaſure. The meat with is not chewed, is neither bitter nor ſweet, and therfore the ſicke man ſwallowes the Pills downe whole, to the end that they may not be offenſiue to him. And for the ſelfe ſame-reaſon, doth not *ſinne*, nor *death*, nor the *laſt Iudgment*, nor the eternall *torments of Hell*, ſeeme bitter in the mouthe of a ſinner, becauſe he cheweth not theſe things; but he ſwallowes them whole, and takes them vpon truſt, and in groſſe, as they come. And for the ſelfe ſame reaſon alſo, doth the *miſtery* of the *incarnation*, *paſsion*, and *reſurrection* of Chriſt our Lord, and the reſt of the benefits of Almighty God, giue to many, little delight, or guſt; becauſe they do not chew, nor ruminate, nor ponder theſe things as they ought. Do you but ſhew, and breake this graine of muſtardſeed, & pepper,

and you ſhall quickly ſee, how it will bite, and fetch the teares from your eyes.

Chap. X.

Of other benefits, and profits which there are, in the vſe of Meditation.

S. Tho. 2. 2. q. 82. art. 3.

Another great benefit & profit there is, as *S. Thomas* ſayth, in *Meditation*; and it is, that true *Deuotion* ſprings from thence; a thing ſo important in ſpirituall life, and ſo much deſired by all them who walke that way. *Deuotion* is no other thing, but a *Promptitude and readineſſe of will, towards all that, which is good.* And therefore a deuoute man is he, who is ready and diſpoſed for all goodneſſe. And this is the generall doctrine of the *Saints*. *S. Thomas* ſayth moreouer, that there are two cauſes of this *Deuotion*, the one is *extrinſecall* which is God, & that is the principall. The other is *intrinſecall* on our part, which is *Meditation*. For this *prompt and ready will*, towards the actiõs of vertue, doth grow from the *conſideration*, and *Meditation* of the *Vnderſtanding*,

ding; and this is that, which next after the grace of God, may be truly ſaid to kindle and blow the fire in our hart.

So that true *Deuotion* and feruour of ſpirit, doth not conſiſte in the ſweetnes and ſenſible guſte, wherof ſome haue experience, and ſenſe in *Prayer*; but in hauing a *will*, which is *prompte* and *ready preſt*, towards all thoſe things which concerne the ſeruice of Almighty God. And this is the *deuotion*, which continues and laſts, whileſt the other comes quickly to an end. For that, doth but conſiſt of certaine affects of ſenſible deuotion, which riſe from a quicke deſire, which one hath, of any thing which is deſirable, and amiable. And many tymes it proceedeth from a mans naturall complexiõ, in that he hath a ſweet diſpoſition, and a tender hart, which is quickly moued towards ſoftneſſe, and teares; & when this kind of deuotion is once dropped downe, the good purpoſes, are aſſoone dryed vp. This is but a tẽder kind of loue, which is grounded in guſtes, and conſolations; and as long as that guſte, and deuotion laſts, the Note

man wilbe very diligent, and punctuall; and he wilbe a friend of ſilence, and recolection. But when that deuotion is ended, there is an end of all. Whereas they, who are ſo grounded in *Truth*, by meanes of *Meditation* and *conſideration*; and are conuinced, & diſabuſed by ſolide reaſon; theſe are the men, who continue and perſeuere in vertue: and although thoſe guſtes & conſolations faile them, yet they are ſtill the ſame, that they were before: becauſe the ſame cauſe and reaſon laſts, which at the firſt induced, & moued them to it.

This is a maſculine, & ſtrong kind of loue, and by this *Touch of triall*, the true ſeruants of God are ſeene: & not in thoſe guſts, and conſolations. They are wonte to ſay, that our paſſions are like certaine little dogs, which ſtand barking at vs; and in the tyme of ſpirituall conſolation, they haue their mouthes muzled vp. And make account that God doth caſte certaine bits of bread, before euery one of them, and with that, they are quiet, & craue nothing: but take you away that bread

of

of conſolation, and then one of them, will begin to barke, and the other of them wilbe as ſure to follow, and then is the tyme to ſee, how euery one doth carry himſelfe. They alſo compare theſe guſtes, and conſolations, to *moueable goods*, & *chattels*, which are ſoone ſpent: but ſolide vertues, are as *freehold*, or *land of inheritance*, which continues and laſts, & ſo they are of more price.

From hence groweth a *Truth*, wherof we take experience many tymes, & it is worthy of conſideration. We ſee ſome perſons, who on the one ſide, haue great comforts in their *Prayer*, and afterward, in temptations & other occaſions of ſinne, we ſee them weake, and fallen. And on the contrary part, we ſee others, who ſuffer great dryneſſe in *Prayer*, and know not what belongs to any ſpirituall conſolation, or guſte; and yet we find theſe laſt, to be ſtronge, when they are tempted, & far from falling. The cauſe of this, is that, which we were ſaying before, That the former ſort of men, did ground themſelues in guſts, and inwarde feelings; but the latter, laide

Note

their foundation vpon reason, & were disabused, conuinced, and possessed with the reall truth of things; and with that, they last, and persuere in those things, which formerly they did resolue.

So that one of the meanes, and that a very good one, which vsually we giue, to make men persuere, in those good purposes which they conceiue in *Prayer*, and to put them in execution, is; That men must procure to conserue in memory, the motiue and reason, which caused that good desire, and purpose in them, formerly; for that which moued them before, to desire it, will helpe them afterwards to conserue, & put it in execution. Nay there is more in this, then what is said. For when a man goeth thus *vnbeguiling*, & conuincing himselfe, in *Prayer*, although afterward he remember not particularly the *medium*, or *reason* which moued him then, yet in vertue of his hauing beene *vnbeguiled* before, and of the resolution which then he tooke, being conuinced by truth and reason he continueth firme and strong, to

Note.

resist

reſiſt the temptation afterward, and to perſeuere in vertue.

Therefore doth Gerſon, eſteeme ſo much of *Meditation*. For being conſulted about, what exerciſe might be more vſefull, or profitable to a *Religious man*, who liueth recolected in his *Cell*, eyther *reading*, or *vocall Prayer*, or ſome worke of the hand, or els to attend to *Meditation*; he anſwered, that (ſauing the duty which they owe to *Obedience*) they were beſt attend to *Meditation*. And he giues this reaſon therof; That although by meanes of *Vocall Prayer*, or reading of ſome ſpirituall booke, a man, for the preſent, may peraduenture find greater profit, and deuotion, then by meanes of *Meditation*; yet in giuing ouer to *pray vocally*, or laying the booke aſide, that deuotion may quickly be at an end; whereas *Meditation* doth profit, and diſpoſe men well, for the future. And therfore he ſayth, That it is fit, that we accuſtome our ſelues to *Meditation*; to the end, that although the ſound of wordes, and the ſight of bookes may faile vs; yet *Meditation* may be our booke, and

Gerſon p. 2. alphab. 34. litera M. & de ſollicitudine religioſa. p. 41. alpha. 6. 37. lit. M.

and so we may not want true deuotion.

CHAP. XI.

Of the manner, which we are to hold in Prayer, *and of the* Fruite *we are to gather thence.*

Psal. 38. 4. CONCALVIT *cor meum intra me, & in meditatione mea exardescit ignis.* In these words, the Prophet *Dauid* teacheth vs, the manner which we are to hold in *Prayer*, according to the explication of many *Doctors*, and *Saints*, who interpret this place, of the *fire of Charity*, and the loue of God, & our neighbour; which was kindled by the *Meditation* of heauenly things, & did burne in the breſt, of the *Royall Prophet*. My hart sayth he, grew into heat, & was all kindled within me. This is the effect of *Prayer*. But how got he this *heat*? How did that fire come to kindle it selfe, in his hart? Will you know how? It was by meanes of *Meditation*. *Et in meditatione mea exardescit ignis.* This is the meanes, and the instrument, for

Hieron. Ambros. Greg. li. 23 mor. c. 3. interlin. & alij.

the

the kindling of this fire. So that as *S. Cyrill of Alexandria* sayth, *Meditation is as the steele which giues against the flint, to the end that fire may be produced.* By discourse and *Meditation* of the *Vnderstanding*, you are to strike vpon the hard *steele* of your *hart*; till such tyme as the *loue of God* may be kindled in it; & a desire be produced of humility, of mortification, and the rest of the vertues; & you are not to giue ouer, till you haue kindled, and bred this *fire*. Cyrillus Alexandrinus.

Although *Meditation* be very good, and necessary, yet the whole tyme of *Prayer*, is not to passe away in discourse, and consideration of the *Vnderstanding*; neither are we to dwell in that; for this would be rather *study*, then *Prayer*. But all the *Meditations* and *considerations* which we are to haue, must be taken, but as a meanes for the awaking, and kindling these affects, and desires of vertue, in our hart. For the sanctity and perfection of a Christian life, doth not consist only in good thoughts, nor in the intelligence of holy things, but in sound, and solide vertue; and especially in the acts, and

opera-

S. Tho. 1. 2. q. 1. art. 8. operations therof; wherin, as *S. Thomas* ſayth, *the laſt perfection of vertue doth conſiſt*; and ſo we muſt principally imploy our ſelues, and inſiſt vpon the procuring of this, in our tyme of *Prayer*.

Note. This is therfore to be our firſt principle in this matter. Yea, and euen the *Philoſopher* ſayth (which is alledged by Gerſon) *Inquirimus quid ſit virtus, non vt ſciamus, ſed vt boni efficiamur*. We go inquiring, and ſearching after the knowing what vertue is; not to the end that we may be more learned, but that we may become good, and vertuous. Thogh the needle be neceſſary to ſow withall; yet it is not the needle, which ſticheth two things togeather, but the thred. And ſo ſhould he be very indiſcreet, who would paſſe the needle in and out, without thred, for this ſhould be, to labour in vayne. And yet this very thing they do, who in *Prayer*, attend only to *meditating*, and *vnderſtanding*, and little to *louing*. *Meditation* is to be as the *needle*, which is to enter firſt; but it muſt be, to the end, that the *thred of loue*, and the affection of our will, may follow after; wherby he muſt ioyne,

Gerſon ſuper Magnificat. alphab. 86. litera D.

ioyne, & vnite our ſelues, to Almighty God.

Our *B. F. Ignatius*, doth put vs in mind herof, after a very particuler māner. After he had placed the *Poynts*, which we are to meditate, with ſome very ſhort conſiderations vpon them, he then ſayth, theſe words: And I am to apply all this to my ſelfe, to th'end that I may reape ſome fruite therby. In this the *Fruite* of Prayer doth conſiſt, that men may know how to referre, & apply that which they *meditate* to themſelues; euery one, according as he hath need. The glorious *S. Bernard* ſayth very well, that as the *Sunne* doth not heat euery one whome it illuminates; ſo *Knowledge*, and *Meditation* (althouh it teach that, which is to be done) yet doth it not moue all men, nor breed an affection in them, to do that which they are taught. One thing it is, to haue notice of great riches, and another to poſſeſſe them. That which makes men rich, is not the hauing notice of riches, but the poſſeſſing them. So is it (ſayth he) one thing to know God and another thing to feare and loue him;

Bern. ſerm. 23, ſuper Cantica.

him; and the *knowing* many things of God, doth not make vs true *Saints*, and ſpiritually rich; but the *louing* and fearing of God. He bringeth alſo another good cõpariſon to this purpoſe; That as he who is hungry, ſhall help himſelfe but a little, by placing before himſelfe, a large table full of exquiſite and choyce meates, if he eate none of them; ſo he who vſeth Prayer, ſhalbe litle the better for hauing a ſumptuous, and curious table, ſet before him, full of excellent, and choyce conſiderations; if he do not feed thereupon, by applying them to himſelfe, with his *Will*.

Note. That we may deſcend a litle more to particulers, I ſay, That the thing which we are to draw out of *Meditation*, and *Prayer*, is to be, Holy affections and deſires, which are framed firſt interiorly in the hart, and afterwards are put in practiſe, in due tyme. *The Bleſſed S. Ambroſe* ſayth, *That action is the end of Meditation. Meditationis præceptorum cæleſtium intentio, vel finis operatio eſt.* Thoſe holy & *Myſterious beaſts* (which the Prophet *Ezechiel* ſaw) amongſt other conditions of theirs, had *wings*, as

Ambroſ. in Pſ. 118. ſuper illud Et meditabar in præceptis tuis. Ezech. 1. 8.

he

he sayth, and vnder them, they had the *hands* of a man. *Et manus hominis, sub pennis eorum*; to giue vs to vnderstand, that the flying, and discoursing with the *Vnderstanding*, must be directed to working. We must therfore fetch from *Prayer*, affects and desires of humility; despising our selues, and desiring to be despised by others. Desires of suffering paine, and troubles, for the loue of God; and being glad of such, as at the present, lye vpō vs. Desires of pouerty of spirit, wishing that the worst things of the house may be for vs; and that something may be wanting to vs, euen of those which are necessary. Griefe, and contrition for sinnes; and firme purposes, rather to burst, then to sinne againe. Gratitude for benefits receiued, and true intiere resignatiō into the hands of God. And finally, a desire to imitate Christ our Lord, and our Maister, in all those vertues, which shine so brightly in his life. To this must our *Meditation* be addressed and ordeyned; and this is the fruite, which we must draw from thence.

Vpon this it followes, That since Note,

we

we take *Meditation*, and the discourse of our *Vnderstanding* for a *meanes* to moue our *Will* to these affections; & that this is the *end* of this businesse; we must so farr vse *Meditation*, and the discourse of our *Vnderstanding*, as shall be fit for this *end*, and no further. For the *meanes* are to carry a proportion, and to receaue their measure from the *end*; and so when we finde our *Will* moued, and mollified with some good affection to any vertue, as namely to *grieue for sinnes, contempt of the world, loue of God, desire to suffer for his sake*, or the like, we must presently cut off the thred of the discourse of the *Vnderstanding*, as a man would draw a Bridge, from before a passenger; and we must detayne our soules, and pause vpon that affection, and desire of our *Will*, till such tyme as we be satisfyed, & till we haue drunke it deeply downe, into our soules.

P. N. Ignatius lib. Exercitiorum spiritual. addit. 4.

This is a very important aduise; & our B. Father, doth place it in his booke of *spirituall Exercises*, where he sayth; That as soone as we haue found that deuotion, and feeling which we desire, we are then to pause, and to detayne

teyne our ſelues therein, without hauing anxiety of paſſing towards any thinge els, till we remaine fully ſatisfyed. Iuſt ſo, as the *Garduer*, when he will water a *peece* of ground, as ſoone as the *water* is entred in ypon it, he deteynes the thred of the current, and giues it meanes to ſoake, & imbrue it ſelfe in the intralls of that dry ſoyle; & till that be ſufficiently done, he ſuffers not the water to paſſe away. So when the water of good affections and deſires, beginnes to enter into the ſoule, which is as *earth without water*, according to that of the Prophet, *Anima mea ſicut terra ſine aqua tibi*; we are to deteyne the current of the diſcourſe, and *Vnderſtanding*, and to remayne, enioying that motion and affection of our will, as long as we can; till ſuch tyme, as our hart may be bathed, and imbrued therwith, and ſo we may remaine fully ſatisfyed. The B. *Saint Iohn Chryſoſtome*, brings another good compariſon, to declare this. Haſt thou ſeene (ſayth he) when the little lambe, goes to ſeeke the breſt of his dáme? what doth it but ſtir, and ſeeke, heere and there, &

Note.

Pſa. 142. 6.

Chryſoſtome.

now takes the tet, and then leaues it. But when once the ſtreame of milke comes clere; the lambe is preſently at a pawſe, and doth enioy the milke at eaſe. So is it in the caſe of Prayer. For till that dew come from heauen, the man goes diſcourſing heere and there. But whē once that heauenly dew deſcends, we are preſently to pawſe, and to enioy that delight, and ſweetneſſe.

Chap. XII.

Of how great importance it is, to deteyne our ſelues, in the acts, & affections of our Will.

IT is of great importance, do teteyne our ſelues, and to make a ſtand, in the acts and affections of the *Will*. And the *Saints*, and Maiſters of ſpirituall life, do eſteeme of it ſo much, as to ſay, that in this conſiſteth, good and perfect Prayer; yea and that alſo, which they call *Contemplation*, when a man no longer is ſeeking incentiues of *Prayer*, by *Meditation*, but ſtands inioying that loue, which he hath ſogh-

and

and found; and doth repoſe therein, as in the *end* of his inquiſition, and deſire: ſaying with the *Spouſe* in the Canticles, *Inueni, quem diligit anima mea; tenui eum, nec dimittam.* I haue found him whome my ſoule loues; I haue him, and I will hold him faſt. And this is alſo that, which the *Spouſe* ſayth in the ſame place, *Ego dormio & cor meum vigilat*; I ſleepe, but my hart is well awake. For in perfect *Prayer*, the *Vnderſtanding* is laide, as it were to ſleepe, becauſe diſcourſe, and ſpeculation being lefte, the *Will* is both watching, and euen melting, with the loue of her fellow *Spouſe*. And he, likes this ſleepe of hers ſo well, that he commaunds it to be nouriſhed in her, *and that she may not be awaked, till she will her ſelfe. Adiuro vos filia Ieruſalem per capreas, cerueſq; camporum, ne ſuſcitetis, neque euigilare faciatis dilectam, donec ipſa velit.* In ſuch ſort, that *Meditation*, and all thoſe other parts, which they touch of *Prayer*, be ordeyned, and addreſſed to this *Contemplation*, and are, as it were, the ladders, wherby we clyme vp to it. So ſayth S. *Auguſtine*, in a booke, which he calleth

Cant. 3. 4.

Cant. 5. 2.

Cant. 3. 5.

Auguſt. de ſcala Perfect.

the *ladder of Paradise: Lectio inquirit, meditatio inuenit, oratio postulat, contemplatio degustat.* Reading seeks, Meditation findes, Prayer desires, but Contemplation enioyes, and gustes, that which was sought, desired, and found. And he brings that of the Gospell, *Quærite & inuenietis, pulsate & aperietur vobis.* Seeke by reading, and you shall find by meditating; knock by Prayer, & it shalbe opened vnto you, by Contemplation. And the *Saints* obserue, and *Albertus Magnus* doth alledge it, that this is the difference betweene the *Contemplation* of *Faythfull Catholiks*, and that of *heathen Philosophers*; That the *Contemplation* of the *Philosophers* was wholy addressed towards the perfecting of the *Vnderstanding*, by the knowledge of such *truthes* as might be knowne; and so it did end in the *Vnderstanding*; for this is the end therof, to *know*, and know more, & yet more, then that. But the *Contemplation* of *Catholikes* and of *Saints* (wherof now we treat) doth not rest in the *Vnderstanding*, but passeth on to moue, and rectify, and enkindle, & inflame the *Will*, with the loue of God, according

Matt. 7. 7.

Albertus magnus l. de adherendo Deo ca. 9.

Note.

ding to that of the *Spouse*: *Anima mea liquefacta est, vt loquutus est.* My soule did euen melt, as soone as my beloued began to speake. And *S. Thomas* treating of *Contemplation*, noteth this very well, and sayth: That howsoeuer *Contemplation* doth essentially consist in the *Vnderstanding*; yet that the last Perfection therof, is *in Loue*, and in the affection of the *Will*; so that the chiefe intent, and end of our *Contemplation*, is to be the affect of the *Will*, and the *loue of God*. Cant. 5. 6. S. Tho. 2. 2. q. 180. art. 7.

In this sort (sayth *S. Augustine*) did Christ our Lord teach vs to pray, when he said in his Gospell, *Orantes autem, nolite multùm loqui*; when ye pray talke not much. *S. Augustine* sayth also: *Aliud est sermo multus, aliud diuturnus affectus; absit ab oratione multa loquutio, sed non desit multa precatio.* One thing it is to speake much, and to discourse, and flourish much with the Vnderstanding; and another thing it is to deteyne our selues much in affects of the Will, and in the acts of Loue. That which he mentioneth first, which is *to talke much*, we are to procure to decline, Aug. libr. de orando Deum ca. 12. quæ est Epistola 121. ad Probum. Matt. 6.

cline, and auoid in Prayer. *Et negotium hoc plus gemitibus quàm sermonibus agitur*; and this busines of Prayer (sayth the Saint,) is not a busines of much talke, nor shall we in Prayer, negotiate so well with Almighty God, by figures, nor plenty of discourse, not delicacy of conceits, as with teares, and sighs, and groanes, and profound desires of the hart, according to that of the prophet *Ieremias: Neque taceat pupilla oculi tui.* Let not the apple of thine eye be silent. *S. Hierome*, vpon these words, askes the question, how the Prophet could say, *That the apple of the eye must not be silent. Is not the tongue* (sayth he) *that which speakes? how then can speach be vsed, by the apple of the eye?* The Saint answers thus. *When we shed teares in the sight of God, it is then rightly said, that the apple of our eye cryes out to him: for howsoeuer we speake not a word with our tongue, with our hart we may cry out to God.* So sayth *S. Paul, Misit Deus spiritum filij sui in corda vestra clamantem, Abba pater.* And in *Exodus* God said to *Moyses, Quid clamas ad me? Why dost thou cry out to me?* & yet he spake not a word, but only, in his

Tren. 2. 18.

Hieron. in Psa. 50.

Ad Gal. 4. 6.

Exodus 14. 15.

his hart he prayed, with ſo great feruour & efficacy, that God ſaid to him, *why doſt thou ſo cry out, before me?* Let vs alſo thus cry out to God, in Prayer, with our eyes (*Neque taceat pupilla oculi tui*) with tears, with ſighes, with groanes, and with the deepe deſire of our harts.

Chap. XIII.

Wherein ſatisfaction is giuen to their complaints, who ſay, that they cannot, nor know not how to Meditate, *nor diſcourſe with their* Vnderſtanding.

Herby we ſhall eaſily anſwere, to a very common complaint of ſome, who afflict themſelues with ſaying, That they know not how to diſcourſe in Prayer, becauſe they meete with no conſiderations which they can dilate; and that they know not how to extend the *Points*, but that inſtantly the threed is cut off.

There is no cauſe, why any body ſhould be in paine for this. For (as I haue ſaid already) this buſineſſe of

Prayer, consisteth more in the affects, and desires of the *Will*, then in the discourse, and speculation of the *Vnderstanding*. Nay the teachers of spirituall life, do aduise here, that we must take care, that the *Meditation* of the *Vnderstanding*, be not too much; because this vseth to giue great hinderance to the motion, & affection of the *Will*, which ought to be the chiefe. And especially, when one deteyneth himselfe in certaine considerations, which are curious and subtile, the *Will* is hindred so much the more. The reason herof is naturall. For it is cleere, that in a fountaine, which makes but one channell of water, and hath many pipes, which conduct and carry it seuerall wayes; how much more water runs by one of them, so much the lesse, will run by the other. Now the power of the *Soule* is bounded, and limitted; and how much more water runs by the pipe of the *Vnderstanding*, so much lesse will run, by that of the *Will*.

Note.

And so we see by experience, that if the soule be in deuotion, and tenderneſſe, & that the *Vnderstanding* will offer

offer then to range abroad, by any curiosity & speculation, the hart doth instantly grow dry, and the deuotion decayes, because all the water is runne into the pipe of the *Vnderstanding*, and therfore that of the *Will* remaineth dry. And so sayth *Gerson*, that it growes frō hence, that they who are not so learned, are sometymes, yea and very often, more deuoute, and more happy in *Prayer*, then they who are learned; because they leake lesse, towards their *Vnderstanding* part; not imploying nor distracting themselues in speculations, or curiosityes; but instantly procuring with playne and clere considerations, to affect and moue the *Will*. And those humble, and homely reflections do moue them more, and worke greatet effects vpon their mindes, then more high and curious conceytes do, vpon the mind of others. As we see in the the person of that holy *Cooke*, (of whome I spake els where) who from the materiall fire which he vsed so much, tooke occasion to be still thinking of the eternall fire of hell; & this he did with so great deuotion, that he

Gerson p. 3. de monte contempl. alph. 73. c. 2. & sequens.

Tract. 5. c. 8.

had the guift of teares, in the middeſt of all his buſineſſe.

Note. And this which followes muſt be much noted. For, ſo the affect, and deſire, be very high and ſpirituall, it matters not a whit, though the conceyt and conſideration, be meane and common. We haue expetience inough of this, in holy *Scripture*; where the Holy Ghoſt declareth to vs very high, and ſublime things, by common, & playne conſiderations, vpon theſe words, *Quis dabit mihi pennas ſicut columbæ, & volabo, & requieſcam*? Who will giue me the wings of a Doue, that I may fly vp and reſt? *S. Ambroſe* aſketh why the Prophet, deſiring to fly vp, and reach to the higheſt, ſhould deſire the *wings of a Doue*, rather then of ſome other bird, ſince there are other birds who are ſpeedier of the wing, then the Doue? And he anſwereth, that the Prophet did it, becauſe he deemed the wings of a *Doue* were beſt for one that meant to fly high, towards perfection, and to obtayne the guift of perfect, & high Prayer; that is to ſay, that harmleſſe, & plaine people of hart, were

Pſal. 54. 7.

Ambr. ſer. 7°.

fitter

fitter for it, then theſe ſharpe and curious Vnderſtandings, according to that of the Wiſe-man, *Et cum ſimplicibus ſermocinatio eius.* They are humble & plaine people of hart, to whome God loues to communicate himſelfe. Pro. 3. 32.

So that no man is to be troubled, in regard that he is not able to diſcourſe, nor finde Conſiderations, nor dilate the points of his *Meditation.* Nay rather they ſay, and with much reaſon, that it is better for them, and that their lot is fallen into fairer and richer ground, to whome Almighty God doth ſtop the veyne of ſuperfluous ſpeculations, and doth open that of the affection; to the end, that with a peaceable and quiet vnderſtanding, the will may repoſe & reſt in God alone, imploying all her loue, and ioy, vpon that ſoueraigne Good. If our Lord do you ſo great fauour, as by the meanes of one playne and ſimple conſideration, or with only thinking how God made himſelfe man, and that he was borne in a ſtable; and laid in no better then a manger, and that he lodged himſelfe vpon a *Croſſe*, for you; to inflame you in the Note

loue

loue of his diuine maiesty, and in a desire to humble, and mortify your selues for his sake; and if you can imploy the whole hower, and many howers in this; much better, and more profitable *Prayer* it is, then if you had made many discourses, and considerations, which were very curious, & sublyme. For thus you imploy, & deteyne your selues in the best, and most substantiall part of *Prayer*, and that which is indeed the end and fruite therof. Wherby the errour of some is easily vnderstood, who when they find not out certaine considerations, wherin they can deteyne themselues long, do not thinke that they make good *Prayer*, & when they meete with store of matter of that kind, they thinke it is excellent.

In the Cronicles of *S. Francis*, it is recounted, how the holy man *Brother Giles*, said thus to *S. Bonauenture*, who then was the *Generall* of his Order: *Great mercy did God shew to you, learned men, and great meanes did he giue you, wherwith to serue and praise his diuine Maiesty; but we ignorant and simple people, who haue no parts of wit or learning; what can we do,*

which

which may be pleasing to Almighty God? S. Bonauenture answered; *If our Lord did no other fauour to man, then that he might be inabled to loue him; this alone were sufficient to oblige him to do God greater seruice, then all the rest put together.* The holy Brother *Giles* replyed thus: *And can then, an ignorant person loue our Lord Iesus Christ, as well a learned man? Yea* (sayth S. Bonauenture,) *a poore old simple woman, may perhaps loue our Lord better, then a great Doctor of Diuinity.* The holy brother *Giles* rose instantly vp, with great feruour, and went into that part of the Garden, which looked towards the Towne; and with a strong voyce cryed out, *O thou poore, thou ignorant, and simple old woman, loue thy Lord Iesus Christ, and perhaps thou shalt grow greater in heauen, then Brother Bonauenture.* And he remained rapt in *Extasis*, as he vsed to be, without stirring from that place, in three howers.

CHAP.

Chap. XIV.

Of two directions which wilbe of much help to vs, for the procuringe to make good Prayer, and to reape much Fruite therby.

TO the end, that we may make our *Prayer* well, and gather that *Fruite* therby, which is fit; it will helpe vs much, if we vnderstand, and go alwaies vpon this *Ground*. That *Prayer* is not the end, but the meanes which we are to take for our profit, & perfection: So that we must not enter vpon *Prayer*, as meaning to make that our last designe. For the perfection of our soules, doth not consist in hauing great consolation, and sweetnes, and *Contemplation*; but in obteyning a perfect mortification, and victory ouer our selues; and ouer our passions, and appetites; reducing our soules (as much as possibly we can) to that happy state of *Originall Iustice*, wherin they were created, when our *sense* and appetite was wholy subiect and conforme to *reason*, and *reason* to *God*. Now we are to take

Note.

take *Prayer*, for the meanes of attaining to this *end*.

Iron is made softe, betweene the *Anuile* and the *fire*, to the end that they may worke it, and double it, and do with it what they list; and iust so it is to be in *Prayer*. To the end that we may not find mortification very difficult and offensiue, but that we may be able to breake our selues of our owne will, and to be content with trouble, as occasion is offered; we had need come to the anuile of *Prayer*, and there with the heat and fire of deuotion, and by the example of Christ our Lord, out hart goes softning it selfe, that so we may worke, and mould it towards any thing that shalbe fit for the greater seruice, and glory of God.

This is the duty of *Prayer*, and this is the Fruit, which we must reape frō thence. And for this purpose it is, that our Lord is wont to giue consolation, and gust in *Prayer*; not to the end that we may stay there; but that we may fly on, by the way of vertue, towards perfection, with the greater alacrity, and speed.

This

This is that which the holy ghoſt meant to giue vs to vnderſtand, in that which happened to *Moyſes*, when he came downe from ſpeaking with Almighty God. The holy Scripture ſayth, That he came forth with great ſplendor in his face; and it noteth, that the ſame *ſplendor* appeared, after the māner of *hornes*, in which the ſtrēgth of beaſts doth conſiſt: to giue vs to vnderſtand, that we are to draw ſtrength frō *Praier*, wherby we may worke well. The ſame Truth, did Chriſt our Lord teach vs, by his example, in the night of his *Paſsion*, reſorting to the help of *Prayer*, once, twice, & thrice; to prouide himſelfe ſo, for his combat, which then he foūd to be at hād. Not that himſelfe had any need therof, as *S. Ambroſe* notes; but to giue example to vs. And the holy Goſpell ſayth, *that an Angell appeared, who gaue him comfort*; and he roſe from Prayer, ſo full of ſtrength, that inſtātly he ſayd to his diſciples, *Surgite, eamus, ecce appropinquauit, qui me tradet*, Riſe vp, let vs go, and meete our enemyes, for behold he approacheth, who will betray me. He maketh offer of himſelfe

Pſa. 118. 32.

Exodus 34. 29.

Ambroſius.

Luca. 6.

Luc. 22. 43.

Matt. 26. 46.

Iſa. 53. 7.

CHE

himselfe, and deliuereth himselfe vp into their hands: *Oblatus est quia ipse voluit.* All this serues but to teach vs, that we must take *Prayer*, as the meanes to ouercome those difficultyes, which present themselues, in the way of vertue.

S. Iohn Chrysostome sayth, that *Prayer* is a kind of tempering, and tuning the Violl of our hart, that so it may make good musicke, in the eares of Almighty God. Our businesse therfore in *Prayer*, must be, to moderate, and tune the cords of our passions, and affections, and of all our actions; to the end that they all, may stand well with reason, and with God. And this is that which we are saying daily; & which we also here others say, in their sermons, and spirituall exhortations, that our *Prayer* must be *Practicall*: That is, it must be addressed to working, and must helpe vs to make those difficultyes smooth, and those repugnances weake, which obiect themselues to vs, in a spirituall life. And for this reason, the holy Ghost called it *Prudence: Scientia Sanctorum Prudentia.* For *Prudence* is addres-

Chrysostome. Note. Pro. 9. 10.

ſed to *working*; to ſhew the difference of this, from the *ſcience* of learned men, which only conſiſteth in *knowing*. And ſo the *Saints* affirme, that *Prayer* is the generall, and moſt efficacious remedy, againſt all our temptations, and all other neceſſityes, and to all the occaſions, which may be offered. And this is one of the chiefe commendations, which belong to *Prayer*.

Theodoret. Note. *Theodoret* relates in his religious Hiſtory, of a holy *Monke*, who ſaid, that Phiſitians cure ſeuerall diſeaſes of the body, euery one with a ſeuerall remedy, nay, that many tymes for the cure of one diſeaſe, they apply many remedyes; for in fine remedyes fall ſhort, & their vertue is lymitted, and abridged. But *Prayer*, is a remedy both vniuerſall, and full of efficacy, againſt all neceſſityes, and to reſiſt all temptations, and bad encounters of the enemy, and to obteyne all vertue; and to apply vnto the ſoule, an infinite good, which is God. For vpon him it takes hold, and in him it reſts, and ſo they call *Prayer*, *Omnipotent*. *Omnipotens oratio, cùm ſit vna, omnia poteſt*. And Chriſt ou

out Redeemer, againſt all temptatiõs, gaue vs this remedy of Prayer. *Vigilate & orate, vt non intretis in tentationem.* *Watch, & pray, leſt you enter into temptatõ.* *Matth. 26. 41.*

The ſecond aduiſe, which will alſo ſerue vs much, for the execution of that which hath beene ſaid, is, That as when we go to *Prayer*, we muſt be prouided of the *Points*, wherupon we meane to *meditate*; ſo alſo we muſt forthinke the *Fruite*, which we deſire to *Chap. 12.* drawfrom thence. But ſome will ſay, how ſhall we know what *Fruite* we *Note.* are to draw, out of Prayer, before we beginne to make it? We deſire that you would declare this to vs, more at large. Content. Did we not ſay euen now, that we muſt go to Prayer in ſearch after a remedy of our ſpirituall neceſſityes, and to obtayne the victory of our ſelues, & ouer our paſſions, & euill inclinations; and that Prayer, is the meanes which we are to take for our reformation and amendement? Well then; before any man enter into Prayer he is to conſider thus with himſelfe, at good leaſure. What is the greateſt ſpirituall neceſſity, that I am ſub-

iect too: What is that, which hindreth my proceeding most, and maketh most warre agaynst my soule. And this is that, which we are to thinke of before; and to place it before our eyes, & to insist vpon it; to fetch the remedy thereof, out of our Prayer. And the prouiding and preparing of the *Points* of our *Meditation* must be addressed to that purpose. I wil giue you an exãple.

I finde in my selfe, a great inclination to be valued and esteemed, and that men should make much accompt of me; and that humaine respects vse to transport me much; and that, when any occasion is offered, whereby my selfe to be vndervalued, I feele it, and I am troubled much, and perhaps somtymes, I make show therof. This me thinkes is that, which makes stiffest war against me, and that which most hindreth my proceeding in spirit, and the peace and quietnes of my soule, and makes me fall into the greatest faults.

Well, if your greatest necessity consist in this, *remedy* must stand in ouercoming, and rooting vp this imperfection.

ction. And this is that which you are to carry in your mind, & that which you are to place before your eyes; & to take it to hart, and to insist vpon it, that so you may obteyne it by Prayer. And so it is an errour, for one to go ordinarily to God, in Prayer, as by chance; to take hold of that, which shall there presente it selfe, (like a Woodman who would shoote at the *Heard*, let the arrow light where it wil) leauing that a part, wherof he standeth in greatest need. But the truth is, that we must not go to Prayer, to take that which comes, but to procure that, which is for our purpose.

The sick man, when he goes into the Apothecaryes shop, layes not hold vpon the first drugge he findes; but vpon that wherof he hath need, for his infirmity. There is one man, who is full of pride vp to the very eyes, another of impatience, another of stiffe Iudgment, and selfe conceit, as is daily seene when any occasion is offered, & he takes himselfe dayly in the manner; and yet he goes vpon Prayer, to flourish, and make fyne conceyts; and Note.

he layes hold vpon that which first comes in his way, or which giues him most gust; picking heere, and there.

This is not the way to gather *Fruite*. A man is alwayes to obserue well, what it is which he needeth most, and to procure the remedy, since he goes to Prayer for that end. *S. Ephrem* brings to this purpose, the Example of that *blinde man* in the Gospell, who came calling, and crying out, to Christe our Lord, *that he would haue mercy on him*. Consider (sayth he) how Christ demanding of him, what it was that he desired? the blind man did instantly represent his greatest necessity, & that which gaue him most payne, which was his want of sight; and of that, he desired to be deliuered: *Dominus vt videam*. Doth he perhaps demand any other of those things, wherof yet indeed he might haue need? Did he say perhaps, *Lord giue me some cloathes, for I am poore*? He askes not that; but, laying aside all other things, he resorts to the thought of his greatest necessity. So are we (sayth he) to do in Prayer, considering wherof we haue most need, insisting

Ephrem. exhort. ad Religiosos de armatura spirituali l. 1. pag. 160.

Luc. 18.

Marc. 10. 51.

ſiſting, and perſeuering in the demand therof, till we obteyne it.

To the end that there may be no excuſe in this, it is to be noted. That howſoeuer it be true, that when he who goes to Prayer, and pretends to produce deſires of the particuler vertues which wanteth moſt, is ordinarily to procure, that the *Points*, & matter vpon which he will meditate, may carry ſome conueniency, and proportion therunto; to the end that the *Will* may be the more quickly moued (and that with greater conſtancy and feruour) to the producing of thoſe deſires; and ſo, may the more eaſily obteyne the Fruite, which he expects; yet it is alſo fit to be vnderſtood, that whatſoeuer Exerciſe a man makes, & whatſoeuer *Miſtery* he meditates, he may yet apply it, to that which he needeth moſt. For Prayer is as the *Mãna* of heauen, which ſauours to euery one, as himſelfe will. If yow would haue it ſauour of *Humility*, or of the *Conſideration of ſinne*, or *death*, or of the *paſsion of our Lord*, or of *benefits receyued*; if you will draw from hence much *griefe*, or

Confuſion for your Offences, it will ſauour of any of theſe things. It will alſo ſauour of *Patience*, if that be the thing, which you would ſtriue to get; & ſo in the reſt.

Chap. XV.

How it is to be vnderſtood, that in Prayer we are to take ſome one thing to hart, whereof we haue greateſt neede, wherein we muſt inſiſt till we obtaine it.

I Will not ſay for all this, that we muſt euer attend to one, & the ſame thing in Prayer. Becauſe howſoeuer our greateſt particuler neceſſity may be the want of *humility*, or the like, yet we may well imploy our ſelues in Prayer, vpon the acts and exerciſes alſo of other vertues. An occaſion preſents it ſelfe to you of cõforming your ſelues to the will of God, in all that which he ſhall diſpoſe, and ordayne cõcerning you; deteyne your ſelues in it, as long as you can; for this will be a very good Prayer, and very well imployed, and will no way blunt the lance, wherewith you meane to take *Humility*, but will rather ſharpen the point therof. It

It comes to your minde, to make a greate act of acknowledgment, and gratitude, for the benefits which you haue receyued from God, aſwell in generall, as particuler; deteyne your ſelues alſo herein, for it is great reaſon, that we ſhould dayly thanke our Lord for the benefits which we haue receyued; & eſpecially, for hauing drawne vs to the ſtate of Religion. It occurs to you to make an act of deteſtation of your ſins, & of much griefe for hauing cõmitted them; & of *firme purpoſe* rather to dy a thouſand tymes then to offend God any more: deteyne your ſelues herein; for it is one of the beſt, & moſt profitable acts, which you are able to exerciſe in your Prayer. It comes into your minde, to make an act of great *loue of God, and of zeale*, and great deſire of the ſaluation of ſoules, and to endure any trouble for them; deteyne your ſelues alſo herein; and heere you may alſo well deteyne your ſelues in deſiring fauour of Almighty God, not onely for your owne ſoules, but for your neighbours, and for the whole *Church*; For this is one, and that a very prin- Note.

principall part of Prayer. In all theſe things, and in the like to theſe, we may well deteyne our ſelues, and it wilbe a very profitable Prayer. And ſo we ſee, that the Pſalms, which are a moſt perfect kind of Prayer, are full of very differēt affects. For this reaſon, *Caſsian*, & the *Abbot Nilus* ſayd, that Prayer was like a *field full of plants*, or like *a garland wrought, and wouen with variety of flowers, of different ſmells*: *Ecce odor filij mei, ſicut odor agri pleni, cui benedixit Dominus.*

Caſsianus Col. 9. c. 7. Nilus. Gen. 27. 27.

There is yet another benefit belonging to this variety; that it procures our *Prayer* to be more eaſily made by vs, and conſequently that we may continue, and perſeuere longer in it. For continuall repetition of the ſame thing, vſeth to make men weary; whereas variety delights, and entertaines. But that which I would ſay is this. It importeth very much, towards our profitting in ſpirit, that for ſome tyme, we take to hart, the procuring of ſome one vertue, wherof we find our ſelues to ſtand in moſt neceſſity; and that principally we inſiſt vpon that, in *Prayer*; beſeeching our Lord earneſt-

Tract. 7. c. 3. & 9. tract. 8. c. 7. Note.

earneſtly, to beſtow it vpon vs; and actuating therein very often, both for dayes, & moneths; and that we may euer carry it before our eyes, & euen riuetted in our harts, till we obteyne it. For after this manner, are the buſineſſes, euen of this world, diſpatched. And ſo they vſe to ſay, by way of *Prouerbe*: *Lord deliuer me, from hauing to do with a man, who hath but one buſineſſe.*

The glorious *S. Thomas* ſayth, that the Deſire vſeth to be ſo much ſtronger, and more efficacious, as it reſolueth more earneſtly, vpon the obteyning of ſome one thing. And to this purpoſe, he bringeth that of the Prophet, *Vnam petij à domino, hanc requiram.* One thing I haue begged of our Lord, & the ſame I will ſtil deſire, *til I obteine it.* He who pretends to acquire any Art, or Science, doth not ſtudy one thing to day, and another to morrow, but he proſecutes that one which he deſires to learne. And ſo he, who pretends to acquire any vertue, muſt principally exerciſe himſelfe, for ſome tyme, therein; applying thereunto his *Prayers*, and all his other ſpirituall Exerciſes

S. Tho. 2. 2. q. 83. ar. 14. arg. 2.

Pſa. 26. 4.

till

Note. till he obtayne it. Eſpecially ſince (according to the doctrine of *S. Thomas*) all the morall vertues, haue great connexion with one another, and they go togeather, and are interlaced in ſuch ſorte, that he who poſſeſſeth one of them, in perfectiõ, ſhall haue them all. And ſo, if you obtayne true *Humility*, you ſhall obteyne therewith, all the *vertues*. Pluck *Pride* wholy out of your hart by the rootes, and plant therein a moſt profound *Humility*; for if you obtayne it, you ſhall haue withall, much *Patience*, and much *Obedience*; and you ſhall complayne of nothing; and any trouble will ſeeme ſmall in your ſight; and all, wilbe thought too honourable and eaſy for you, in reſpect of that which you deſerued. If you haue *Humility*, you will alſo haue much *Charity* towards your brethren, eſteeming them to be all good, and only your ſelfe, ſtarke naught. You will haue much *ſimplicity of hart*, and will not lightly paſſe your iudgment vpon any other; but will feele your owne miſeryes, and faults ſo much, as that you will not thinke of other folkes.

S. Tho. 1. 2. q. 65. art. 1.

And

And after the ſame manner, we might go diſcourſing vpon other vertues.

For this reaſon alſo, it is a very good courſe, to apply your particuler *Examen*, to that, which you direct your *Prayer* too, and ſo to ioyne one, with the other. For in this ſort, all our *Exerciſes*, being bent one way, at once, much buſineſſe wilbe done. And *Caſſian* proceedeth yet further: For not only in our *Examen*, and the moſt retired kind of *Prayer*, will he haue vs inſiſt vpon that, wherof we haue moſt need; but alſo that we ſhould many tymes in the day, lift vp our ſpirit to our Lord, for that purpoſe, with *iaculatory Prayers*, and ſighes, and groanes of our hart; and that we alſo ſhall do well, to add other pennances, & mortifications, and particuler deuotions, to the ſame end, as I ſhall ſhew els where, more at large. For if this be the greateſt neceſſity which I haue, if this be the greateſt Vice, or euill inclination, which raignes in me, and which makes me fall into the greateſt faults; if, vpon the rooting vp, and ouercomming of this vice, and obteyning the con-

Note.

Caſsia. nus.

Tract. 7. c. 9.

contrary vertue, dependeth the ouercoming and rooting vp of all Vice, & the obteyning of all vertue; all diligence and labour ſhal be but well imployed, in this buſineſſe.

Chriſoſt. tract. de oratione. S. Chryſoſtome ſayth; That *Prayer* is as a *fountaine*, in the middeſt of an Orchard, or Garden, without which *fountayne*, all is withered and dry; but with it, all is greene, and freſh, and flouriſhing. Our ſoule muſt be watered, by this *fountaine* of *Prayer*. For this is that, which muſt keepe the plants of all vertue, in continuall freſhnes & fertility, as *Obedience*, *Patience*, *Humility*, *Mortification*, *Recollection*, and *Silence*: But as in a *Garden*, or *Orchard*, there vſeth to be ſome one tree, or dainty flower, which is more eſteemed and regarded, & to which the *water* is conducted with more care, then to the reſt; and although water ſhould be wanting to others, it muſt not be wanting to it; & although there want tyme for tending the reſt, there will not want tyme for it: iuſt ſo it muſt be in the *Orchard*, and *Garden* of our *ſoule*. It muſt all be watered, and conſerued, by

by the ſpring of *Prayer*; but yet ſtill, you are to haue an eye to ſome one principall thing, wherof you are in greateſt need, and to that you muſt chiefly reſort; and for that, there muſt neuer want any tyme. And as at the *Chap. 11.* going out of your *Garden*, you lay hold of that *flower* which contents you moſt, and you go out with it, in your hand; ſo alſo in *Prayer*, you are to lay hold of that, wherof you haue moſt need, and to gather it, as a *Fruite* from thence.

Hereby ſufficient anſwere is giuen to that which vſually is asked: If it be good for a man to draw that fruite from *Prayer*, which is agreable to the *Exerciſe*, whereupon he *meditates*? We haue already ſaid, that although a man muſt euer haue a particuler eye, vpon that wherof he hath moſt need; yet with all, that it is good for him, to exerciſe himſelfe, and to actuate in the affects and acts of other vertues, agreable to the *myſtery* which is meditated. But yet a point of great importance is to be obſerued heer; That thoſe affects, and acts which we ſhall make

and

and exerciſe in *Prayer*, about thoſe *vertues*, which occur to vs, in conformity of that which is meditated, are not to be paſſed ouer ſuperficially, or curſorily; but at great leaſure, & by making a quiet ſtād vpon them, till ſuch tyme as wē ſatisfy our ſelues; and till we feele, that it ſticks, as it were, by the very ribs of our ſoule; and is, after a ſort incorporated therunto. And this we are to do, althogh it coſt vs the whole houre, as was ſaid before. For one of theſe affects, and acts continued after this ſort, is much better, and doth profit vs more, then to make many acts of ſeuerall Vertues, and paſſe them ouer, in a poſting manner.

Note.

One of the reaſons, why ſome do not profit ſo much in *Prayer*, is becauſe they are faulty in this point, and go leaping and skipping on the acts of ſeuerall vertues, ſaying within themſelues; heere an act of *Humility* comes well in, and then they make an act of of Humility, & then away; then they thinke it is to the purpoſe, if they make an act of *Obedience*, and then they make an act of *Obedience*; and ſhortly after

after of *Patience*; & ſo they go runing, like a Cat ouer the coales; ſo lightly, that although there were fire, it wold do them no hurt. Therfore when they riſe from *Prayer*, all is forgotten and loſt, and they remayne as tepide, and vnmortifyed as before. *Doctor Auila* reprehendeth them, who being about one thing in *Prayer*, as ſoone as any other thing, doth offer it ſelfe, they inſtantly giue ouer the former. And he ſayth, that vſually this is a fraude of the diuel, who by inducing them, like ſome Pye, to skip from one branch to another, depriues them of the *Fruit* of their *Prayer*. *Auila ep. 75. in Audi filia.*

I ſay, it importeth much, that we deteyne our ſelues, in the affects & deſires of vertue, till ſuch tyme as our ſoules be euen imbrued therewith. As if you will actuate about contrition, or griefe for ſin, you are to ſtay therein, till you find a great deteſtation and horror of ſin, according to that of the *Prophet*; *Iniquitatem odio habui, & abominatus ſum.* For this will make vs depart from *Prayer*, with firme purpoſe, rather to vndergoe a thouſand deaths, Note. *Pſa. 118. 163.* Note.

then to commit one single mortall sinne. And so doth S. *Augustine* note very well, that to conceiue horrour against some sinnes, as *Blasphemy*, the *murthring of a mans father*, and the like, is easily done; for men seldome fall vpon such crymes: but it is to be endeauoured concerning other more vsuall offences, wherof the Saint affirmeth, that *Consuetudine ipsa viluerunt*: *By custome men haue lost the feare, and horror which is fit; and therefore men easily fall into them.* In the same manner, if you will actuate, and exercise your selues in *Humility*, you must deteine your selues, in the affect and desire of being meanely esteemed, and despised, till at last your soule may go drinking vp, and be imbrued with this affection, and desire; & so all these fumes, and frothes of pride, may go diminishing, and decaying. And the same is to be done, in exercising the affects, and acts of other vertues.

Hereby it doth easily appeare, how much it will help towards our good, that we take to hart, and insist, & persеuere in the demaund of some one thing,

thing, after the fashiō which we haue declared. For if this affect, and desire of being despised, and held in meane accounte, or any other like affect, might continue in vs, one houre in the morning, and another in the euening, and as much in the day following, and diuers other dayes after that; it is plaine inough, that it wold worke another manner of effect in our hart; and our soules would receiue another manner of impression, and incorporation of that vertue, then if we should passe it, lightly ouer. *S. Chrysostome* sayth, that as no one shower of raine, nor watering by the hand, will suffice for any soile, how fruitfull soeuer it may be, but there wilbe need of many showers, and many waterings; so also will it be necessary, that our soule may haue many wateringes of much *Prayer*, to the end that it may be bathed, and imbraed therewith. And he bringeth, to this purpose, that of the Prophet, *Septies in die laudem dixi tibi:* Seauen tymes a day did the *Prophet David* water his soule, with the streame of *Prayer*; and he deteyned himselfe much,

Chrysostome.

Note.

Psa. 118. 164.

much, in the same affects, repeating the same, ouer and ouer, many tymes, as is to be seene abundantly in the *Psalmes*. And in one alone, he repeateth the same thing, seauen and twenty tymes, *Et in eternum misericordia eius*; proclaiming, and exalting the mercy of our Lord. And in fiue only verses, of another *Psalme*, he awaketh, and inuiteth vs, to praise God, an eleauen seuerall tymes.

Psal 135. *Psal.* 150.

And Christ our Lord, did, by his owne example, instruct vs in this kind of *Prayer*; and in perseuering about the same thing, as we see in his *Prayer* of the *Garden*, for he was not contented to make that *Prayer*, to his *Eternall Father*, only once; but he renewed it the second, & the third tyme, repeating the selfe same words, *Eundem sermonem dicens*. Yea, and the holy Gospell sayth, that at the end, he prayed more at large, then he had done before: To teach vs, that we are to insist, and perseuer in *Prayer*, about some one, and the same thing; repeating it, and replying more then once. For by this meanes, and by perseue-

Matt. 26. 44.

Lucæ. 22. 43.

tance therein, we shall come, to attaine that vertue, and perfection, which we desire.

Chap. XVI.

How we may be able to deteyne our selues much in Prayer, *about the same thing: and the way and practise of a very profitable kind of Prayer is set downe; and that is, to descend to particular Cases.*

IT remaynes, that we deliuer the manner which we are to hold herein; to the end that we may be able to deteyne our selues in Prayer, a long tyme together, in desire of one, and the same vertue, since it is of so great importance, as hath beene sayd. The playne, and vsuall meanes which is wont to be giuen for this purpose, is to procure to continue the selfe same act, and affect of will, or to reiterate and repeate it agayne, like one who giues a push to a wheele, that it may not stand; or like one who still is casting fresh wood into the fire; helping our selues for this purpose, of the first consideration, which in

the beginning, did moue vs to this affect, and deſire when we finde that it is apt to coole, and ſaying with the prophet; *Conuertere anima mea in requiem tuam, quia Dominus benefecit tibi.* Awake thou, O my ſoule, and returne to thy repoſe and reſt, & conſider how much it imports thee, and how great reaſon it is, that thou ſhouldeſt ſerue our Lord, to whome thou oweſt ſo much.

Pſa. 114. 7.

When the firſt conſideration doth not ſerue to moue vs, we muſt ſerue our ſelues of ſome other, or els paſſe on, to ſome other *Point*. And for this purpoſe, we are euer to carry diuers *Points* prouided, to the end that when one of thē is diſpatched, & that already it ſeemes to moue vs no more, we may proceed on to another, and yet another, which may, by refreſhing, affect, and moue vs, to what we deſire. And further we muſt doe in this, as in the caſe of corporall foode, which (to auoyd that faſtidiouſnes, which is vſually cauſed by continuing long to eat of the ſame meate) we are wont to dreſſe, and diſguiſe in ſeuerall manners; and therby it ſeemeth new, and giueth

Note.

giueth vs a new kind of guſte. Euen ſo, to the end that we may continue a long tyme in demaund of the ſame thing in *Prayer*, which is the very food and ſuſtenance of our ſoule, it is a good way, to dreſſe it, in different máners. This we may do ſometymes, by paſſing, from one conſideration, to another; or from one *Point* to another, as we ſaid euen now. For euery tyme that a man moues himſelfe, and actuates vpon the ſame thinge, by a different reaſon, or conſideration, it is like dreſſing it, after another faſhion, & it growes to be like a new diſh of meate.

Againe, although there ſhould be no new reaſon, or conſideration at hand, yet the affect and deſire of the ſame vertue, may, in it ſelfe, be dreſſed ſeuerall wayes. As if one pretend to get *Humility*, ſometymes he may be deteyning his minde, in the knowledge of his owne miſery & weaknes; deſpiſing and confounding himſelfe for that. At other tymes, he may entertayne himſelf in a deſire to be diſeſteemed, and deſpiſed by others, not ma- Note.

king any account of the opinion, and eſtimation of men; but holding it all to be meere vanity. At other tymes, he may be giuing himſelfe confuſion, and ſhame, to ſee the faults, wherin he daily takes himſelfe; and to aske both pardon, and redreſſe of them, at the hands of God. At other times, he may do it, by admiring the goodneſſe of God, which endureth him; whereas yet ſometimes, we can hardly endure, euen our very ſelues. At other tymes by giuing him thanks, for not ſuffering vs to fall, into more grieuous crymes. And by this variety, & difference of Acts, that faſtidiouſnes (which vſually is cauſed by continuance of the ſame thing) may be auoided; and it may grow to be of facility, & guſte, to continue, and perſeuer in the acts, and affects of the ſame vertue, by meanes wherof, it growes to take deeper roote, and more entire poſſeſſion of the hart. For as the *Fyle*, euery tyme that it paſſeth vpon the *Iron*, carryes ſomewhat with it; ſo euery tyme that we produce any act of *Humility*, or other vertue, ſome part of the contrary vice,

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is diminiſhed, and diſcharged therby.

Beſides this, there is another meanes to make vs perſeuere, in deſire of the ſame thing in *Prayer*, many daies togeather, which is both very eaſy, and very profitable; and this is, by diſcending to particuler caſes. The teachers of mē in the way of *Spirit*, do note, that we muſt not content our ſelues, to draw from *Prayer*, a *generall Purpoſe* to ſerue God; or only to proceed in vertue, and to be perfect, at large; but that we muſt deſcend in particuler, to that wherein we know or conceiue, that we may moſt pleaſe, and ſerue our Lord. Neither yet, are we to content our ſelues with conceauing any generall deſire of any particuler vertue, as namely to be *humble*, to be *obedient*, to be *patient*, or to be *mortifyed*, becauſe this kinde of deſire, or rather velleity of any vertue, is intertayned thus in generall, euen by vicious men. For as *vertue* is truly beautifull, & honorable, and of great vſe, not only for the next, but euen alſo for this life; ſo it is an eaſy thing to loue it, and to deſire it, in ſuch a generall manner. But we, when Note.

when we meditate vpon that vertue which we deſire, muſt diſcend to particuler caſes.

As for example; if we pretend to obteyne a great *Conformity* with the will of God, we muſt deſcend to conforme our ſelues, with his will, in particuler things; aſwell in ſicknes, as in health; aſwell in death, as in life; aſwell in tentation, as in conſolation. If we pretend to obteyne the vertue of *Humility*, we muſt alſo deſcend to particulers, by imagining ſuch caſes, as may be preſented, or which vſe to offer theſelues, for our being deſpiſed, or diſeſteemed; and ſo, in the reſt of the Vertues. For theſe are thoſe particulers, which are vſually moſt felt, and wherein the difficulty of the vertue doth moſt conſiſt; and wherby a man is beſt diſcouered, and proued; and theſe are alſo the meanes, wherby vertue, is beſt obteyned.

We muſt alſo procure to begin to make our firſt inſtances, by thoſe things, which are of the leſſer ſorte, & more eaſy; & we are afterward to riſe to the more hard, wherein we thinke

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we ſhould haue more difficulty, if the occaſion were offered; & ſo to go adding ſomewhat, & riſing vp by little, and little, from the leſſe, to the greater. And we muſt actuate in the particulers, as if we had them preſent with vs; & that, ſo long, as that nothing which concernes the Vertue to which we pretend, may preſent it ſelfe to vs, *to which we may not boldly make head, and ſo the field remaine ours.* And when any reall, and true occaſions do occur, we muſt firſt imploy our ſelues in them, diſpoſing our ſelues to manage them well, and with profit, euery one, according to his ſtate. A good ſeruant of God, did alſo add this aduiſe, that in *Prayer* we ſhould propound ſomething in particuler, concerning ſuch, or ſuch a Vertue, which we ſhould act that day. So low as this, do they ſay, that we muſt deſcend in *Prayer.*

This is one of the moſt profitable things, which we can exerciſe in *Prayer*; for it muſt be *Practicall*, that is to ſay, addreſſed to action, which may helpe vs to worke, according to that vertue which we deſire to obtayne; & to *Chap. 14.*

when we meditate vpon that vertue which we desire, must discend to particuler cases.

As for example; if we pretend to obteyne a great *Conformity* with the will of God, we must descend to conforme our selues, with his will, in particuler things; aswell in sicknes, as in health; aswell in death, as in life; aswell in tentation, as in consolation. If we pretend to obteyne the vertue of *Humility*, we must also descend to particulers, by imagining such cases, as may be presented, or which vse to offer thé-selues, for our being despised, or disestemed; and so, in the rest of the Vertues. For these are those particulers, which are vsually most felt, and wherein the difficulty of the vertue doth most consist; and wherby a man is best discouered, and proued; and these are also the meanes, wherby vertue, is best obteyned.

We must also procure to begin to make our first instances, by those things, which are of the lesser sorte, & more easy; & we are afterward to rise to the more hard, wherein we thinke

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we ſhould haue more difficulty, if the occaſion were offered; & ſo to go adding ſomewhat, & riſing vp by little, and little, from the leſſe, to the greater. And we muſt actuate in the particulers, as if we had them preſent with vs; & that, ſo long, as that nothing which concernes the Vertue to which we pretend, may preſent it ſelfe to vs, *to which we may not boldly make head, and ſo the field remaine ours.* And when any reall, and true occaſions do occur, we muſt firſt imploy our ſelues in them, diſpoſing our ſelues to manage them well, and with profit, euery one, according to his ſtate. A good ſeruant of God, did alſo add this aduiſe, that in *Prayer* we ſhould propound ſomething in particuler, concerning ſuch, or ſuch a Vertue, which we ſhould act that day. So low as this, do they ſay, that we muſt deſcend in *Prayer.*

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to explane the difficultyes, & to ouercome the repugnances, which may oppoſe themſelues; and becauſe it importeth much, that we make triall, and take eſſay, as it were, of our ſelues, before, as ſouldiers vſe to do, who before they go to the warre, vſe to try themſelues in tiltings, and torneys, & barriers, and incounters, and other ſuch like exerciſes, that they may be the better diſpoſed, and dextrous towards a true warre. And *Caſsian* doth much commend this Exerciſe, for the vanquiſhing of Vice, and Paſſion, and for the obteyning of Vertue. Yea, & *Plutarch* himſelfe, and *Seneca* alſo, amongſt the *Pagans*, ſay, that ignorant men do not vnderſtand how much it imports towardes the appeaſing of trouble, when it arriueth, to imploy the thoght vpon it, before hand.

Caſsianus col. 19. c. 16.

Plutarch. Epiſt. ad Pac. de tranquill. animi. Seneca. l. de conſolatione. ad Heluiam cap. 5.

They ſay it helpeth much, to beſtow a mans thoughts in the conſiderations of difficultyes, and troubles. For that, as he who imployes his mind vpon ſoft, and delightfull things, makes himſelfe effeminate, and looſe, & good for nothing; and vpon the approach

Note.

proach of any thing which is contrary and offensiue to such a one, he receiueth much disgust; and being accustomed to that base kind of delicacy, he turnes his backe, and seekes a leaning-place for his hart, vpon certaine agreable, and delightfull obiects; so he who doth accustome himselfe, always to imagine sicknes, banishment, imprisonment, and all those other aduersityes, which may happen, wilbe better disposed, and prouided for them, when they come; and we shall growe to find, that these are things which giue more feare in the beginning, then they bring hurt in the end. *S. Gregory* deliuered this excellently well; *Minùs enim iacula feriunt, quæ præuidentur:* The blow wounds not so deeply, when you were expecting it, and had halfe swallowed it before it came, as when it surpriseth you, vpon the sudden. *Greg. ho. 35. super Euang.*

The example for this purpose is excellent, which we read of our *B. F. Ignatius.* When once he was sicke, the *Phisitian* willed him that he should not giue place to sorrow, nor to pensiue thoughts. Vpon this occasion, he began *Li. 5. c. 1. vitæ P. N. Ignatij.*

gan to thinke attentiuely, within himselfe, what kind of thing might happen to him so vnsauory, & vntoward, as to afflict, and trouble the peace, and rest of his soule. And hauing passed the eyes of his consideratiõ, ouer many things, one only occurred, which stuck neerer to him then the rest, & it was, *If perhaps the Society should come to be dissolued.* He proceeded on, to examine himselfe, how long the affliction, and paine were likely to hold him, in case such a thing as that, should happen. And it seemed to him (so that it should happen, without his fault) that within one quarter of an houre, wherein he might recollect himselfe, and be in *Prayer*, he should be deliuered of that disquiet, and should returne to his accustomed tranquillity, and peace of mind. And he yet added further, that he would hope to holde that quietnesse and tranquillity, although the *Society* should be dissolued, and defeated, euen *as a graine of salt, is, in the water.* This is a very good, and a very profitable kind of *Prayer.*

Iac. 5. 13. The Apostle *S. Iames*, in his *Canonicall*

call Epiſtle ſayth: *Triſtatur aliquis veſtrum, oret:* when you feele your ſelfe in affliction, or diſcomfort, reſort to *Prayer*, and there you ſhall find comfort and remedy. And ſo did the *Prophet Dauid*; *Renuit conſolari anima mea; memor fui Dei, & delectatus ſum.* When he found himſelfe diſcomforted, he remembred God, and raiſed vp his hart to him; and preſently his ſoule was filled with this ioy and conſolation; This is the wil of God, ſo he will haue it: which is the contentment of all contentments. *Pſa. 76.4.*

Now, as after the arriuall of the occaſion of trouble, it is very good & expedient, to reſorte to *Prayer*, for the bearing of it well; ſo alſo doth it much importe, to take this remedy, by way of preuention, and preſeruatiue, to the end that afterward, it ſeeme not new and hard, but gentle, & light. *S. Chryſoſtome* ſayth, that one of the principall cauſes why the Holy *Iob*, continued ſo firme, and conſtant in all his aduerſityes, and troubles, was, becauſe he had prouided himſelfe for them, by way of imagination, and premeditation, and actuation vpon them; as vpō *Chryſ. ho. de auaritia.*

a thing which might happen, according to that which himselfe relateth,

Iob. 3. 25. *Quia timor quem timebam, euenit mihi; & quod verebar, accidit.* But now if you be not prouided for it before hād, & if euē in the bare desire, you finde difficulty; what will become of you, in the worke it selfe? And if yet, whilst you are in *Prayer*, & when you are far from the occasion, you find not hart, and courage inough in your selfe, to imbrace such an action, and occasion, and contempt, and trouble as is on foote; what will become of you, when you are gone from Prayer, and when the difficulty of the occasion & action is at hand? And when you are remoued from the meditation & consideration, of the example of Christ our Lord, which giues you breath, and hart? When you are sometymes in *Prayer*, you are carried to the desire of such occasions as those, and yet when the occasion is offered you faile; what will become of the busines, if euen in the tyme of *Prayer*, you desire it not? If he who *purposeth*, do often *faile*, how sure will that other man be to faile, who late,

Tho. de Kempis.

late, or neuer will ſo much as *purpoſe*?

By this meanes, we giue a man very copious matter, to continue, & perſeuere in *Prayer*, concerning the ſame thing, and with the ſame affect or deſire, many howers togeather, & many dayes. For the particuler caſes which may occurre to vs, and to which we may deſcend, are without number; & to be able to make head to all, will finde vs worke inough, to do. And when you ſhall arriue to thinke, that you finde ſtrength inough in your minde for all, and that you can performe it with a good will; do not yet conceiue, that your buſineſſe is already brought to an end. You haue yet a lōg way to go. For there is a great deale of difference, betweene doing, and ſaying; and betweene the *deſire*, & the *deed*. It is clere, that the *deed*, is farre more difficult, then the *deſire*. For in the *deed*, or worke, the obiect it ſelfe is preſent; but in the *deſire*, there is nothing preſent, but the *imagination* of the *deed*. And ſo it happeneth to vs many times, that in *Prayer*, we are full of feruour; and it ſeemes to vs, as if nothing Note.

were able to ſtand in our way. And yet afterward, when the occaſion is offerred, and that it calls vs to put our hand to worke, we find our ſelues far, from what we thought.

It ſufficeth not therfore, that you finde thoſe good deſires in your ſelues; but you muſt procure, that they may prooue ſo full of efficacy, that they may extend, or reach to the very *worke*; for this is the true touch of *Vertue*. And if you ſee that your *deeds* agree not with your *deſires*, but that when an occaſion is offered, you diſcerne your ſelfe to be another man, then when you were in *Prayer*; be confounded with ſhame, to find that all goes away in bare *deſires*. Or rather confounde your ſelues with ſhame, becauſe thoſe *deſires*, by all probability, were not true ones, but conceits, and imaginations; ſince ſo poore, and ſo weake a thing, can put you afterward into diſorder & diſguſt; & can make you turne backe, where you were before. And as the Smith, when his worke prooues not well, returnes yet once againe to his *Anuile*, to redreſſe & accommodate it,

that

that it may come right; ſo are you to returne to this *Anuile* of *Prayer*, that ſo you may beate your *deſires* into a better mould; & giue not ouer, till your *deſire*, and your *deed* ſhake hands together; and ſo, as that there be no more falling out.

Yea and yet, euen when you ſhall arriue to this, that you conceiue your ſelfe to beare the occaſions which are offered you, with vertue; do not yet make your ſelfe believe, that all the buſineſſe is brought to an end. For in the ſelfe ſame worke, there are many degrees, and ſteps, wherby to riſe, before you can arriue to the perfection of that Vertue. For firſt you muſt exerciſe your ſelfe to carry, with *Patience*, all the occaſions which ſhalbe preſented; for this is the firſt degree of *Vertue*. Suffer things at leaſt with *Patience*, if you cannot do it with *Alacrity*. And for the performing euen of this, there wilbe inough to do for ſome dayes, and not a few. And when you ſhall haue arriued, to beare al hard incounters with *Patience*; yet much more way is to be made, for the attayning to the perfe- Note.

ction of *Vertue*. For (as a *Philosopher* sayth) *the signe that a man hath obteyned the perfection of a vertue, is when he performes the workes therof* (*promptè, faciliter, & delectabiliter*) with promptitude, with facility, and with delight. Well then, consider if you performe the workes of vertue, of *Humility*, of *Pouerty* of *spirit*, of *Patience*, and of the other vertues, with *promptitude, with facility, and with delight, or gust*; and you shall see therby, if you haue obteyned that *vertue*. Consider if you be as glad of *dishonour*, and *contempte*, as worldely men are wonte to take delight, in *honor*, and *estimation*: which is the *Rule*, that our *B. F. Ignatius* sets before vs, he hauing taken it first, out of the Gospell. Consider, if you be as glad, and do take as much gust, in *pouerty* of dyet, & cloathing, and lodging, and that the very worst of the house be giuen to you, as the couetous man would be, of full coffers. Consider, if you be as glad of *mortification*, and *suffering*, as they of the world, vse to be, of *repose*, and *rest*. If then, we be to arriue to this perfection, in euery vertue, we shall

Cv4. exam. 6. 4. & reg. 11. Summarij.

shall well haue inough to do, for many dayes, and peraduenture years, although we did attempt, but some one of them.

CHAP. XVII.

That in the consideration of these Mysteries, we are to go on, at good leasure, and not to passe ouer them superficially: and of some meanes which help therein.

IN the consideration of diuine *mysteries*, it doth also much importe, to dig and sound towards the same thing, and not to passe cursorily, through them. For one *mistery* well considered, and pondered, will profit vs more, then many, which are looked vpon with superficiall eyes. Our *B. F. Ignatius*, in his booke of *spirituall Exercises*, doth therefore make so much account of *repetitions*, as that instantly after euery *Exercise* men are to make one *Repetition*, and sometymes two. For that which a man findes not, the first tyme, by perseuerance, he will find, the second. *Quia qui quærit inuenit, & pulsanti aperie-*

Note.

P. N. Ignatius libi Exercitiorum spiritualium.

Matt. 7. 8.

Num. 20. 11. *aperietur. Moyſes* ſtrucke with his *rod*, vpon the *rocke*, and drew forth no *water* vpon the firſt blowe; but he drew it forth, vpon the ſecond.

And Chriſt our Lord, did not cure, at a clap, one of thoſe blind men in the *Goſpell*; but he went curing him, by little, and little. Firſt he applyed *ſpittle to his eyes*, and asked him if he ſaw any thing. The patient anſwered, that he ſaw certaine things in groſſe, but that he diſtinguiſhed not well, what they were. *Videō homines, velut arbores ambulantes. The men ſeemed to him, but walking trees.* Our Lord returned to apply his hands to his eyes, and he cured him out right; ſo that he ſaw diſtinctly and cleerely. So doth it vſe to be in *Prayer*, when turning, & returning to the ſelfe ſame thing, one diſcouereth more, then at the firſt. As when a man enters into a darke roome, at the firſt he ſeeth nothing; if he continue a while, he begins to ſee. Particularly we muſt procure to deteyne our ſelues ſtill, in the conſideration of things, till ſuch tyme as we may be very well *vnbeguiled*, and fully poſſeſſed of what is true;

Mark. 8. 24.

true; and well conuinced and resolued, vpon the doing of what is fit. For this is one of the chiefe *Fruits*, which we are to draw out of Prayer: and wherein it concernes vs much, to go well grounded, as we said before. Cap. 9.

As for the meanes, which are to help vs, to consider and ponder these *mysteryes* in this manner, if our Lord send downe, some little beame of his diuine light, and open the eyes of the soule, it findes so much to consider, and hath so much, wherein to deteyne it selfe, that it can say with the *Prophet*, *Reuela oculos meos, & considerabo mirabilia de lege tua. Lætabor ego super eloquia tua, sicut qui inuenit spolia multa.* The second of these places, declares the first. I will reioyce in the consideration of those misteryes and meruailes, which I haue found in thy law, as a man would reioyce, after he had won a battell, and met with abundance of rich spoiles. Psa. 118. 18.

With the blessed *S. Augustine*, and *S. Francis*, the whole dayes & nights did passe at ease, in the Consideration of these two, or three words, *Nouerim te, & nouerim me*. *Let me know my selfe,*

and let me know thee. Deus meus, & omnia. My God, and my all things. Which is a kinde of Prayer, of great conformity, with that, wherof the Prophet *Iſay* ſayth, that it was vſed by thoſe Citizens of Heauen, who being ſuſpended in the *Contemplation* of that diuine Maieſty, are perpetually ſinging, and ſaying, and repeating, *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus; Holy, Holy, Holy.* The ſame, ſayth *S. Iohn*, ſpeaking in the *Apocalyps*, of thoſe *Myſterious beaſts, which ſtood before the throne of God: Et requiem non habebant die ac nocte, dicentia, Sanctus Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus omnipotens, qui erat, & qui eſt, & qui venturus eſt.* And they had no reſt, nether by day, nor night, from ſaying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Omnipotent, who was, who is, and who is to come.

Iſa. 63.

Apoc. 48.

But to the end that we may arriue to this, it is fit (foraſmuch as is on our part) that we vſe to deteyne our ſelues, in the conſideration of the *myſteryes*, ſtill pondering, and ſounding into the particularityes therof, and exerciſing our ſelues therein. *Gerſon* ſayth, *That one of the principall meanes which we*

Gerſon 3. p. alphab. 76. litera D. & alphab. 77. litera Z.

can

can ſet downe, and which will help vs moſt, towards the enabling of vs to make Prayer well, wilbe, the very ordinary, & continuall Exerciſe therof. It is no buſineſſe this, which can be taught by *Rhetorick*, and *Figures*; nor is to be learned, by only hearing many diſcourſes, nor reading many treatiſes of *Prayer*; but by putting the hand to worke, and by much practiſe therof. When a mother will teach her child to go, ſhe ſpends not a whole houre in giuing him leſſons, about the faſhion that he is to hold in going; bidding him change the poſture of his feete, now in this faſhion, and then in that; but by putting him vpon the exerciſe of it, ſhe makes him goe; & ſo the child learnes, and knowes, how he is to goe. Note.

Now this is the very meanes, wherby we are to learne this Science of *Prayer*. And although it be very true, that for the obtayning of the guyft of *Prayer*, or any other, which is ſupernaturall, no labour of ours is ſufficient, but it muſt come from the gratious, and liberall hand of God; *Quia Prou. 2. Dominus dat ſapientiam, & ex ore eius prudentia,*

dentia, & ſcientia; becauſe it is our Lord who giueth wiſdome, and prudence, and ſcience proceedeth out of his mouth; Yet his diuine Maieſty is pleaſed, that we ſhould exerciſe our ſelues therein, as carefully, as if we were to obteyne it only by that meanes. For
Sap. 8. 1. he diſpoſeth of all things ſweetly; *Attingit à fine vſq; ad finem fortiter, & diſponit omnia ſuauiter.* And ſo he diſpoſeth of the workes of *Grace*, aſwell as of the workes of *Nature*. And as other arts & ſciences, are obteyned by practiſe, ſo is alſo this of *Prayer*. By playing on the lute, a man learnes to play; by going, to goe; and by *Praying*, a man learnes to *Pray*. And ſo *Gerſon* ſayth, that the cauſe, why, at this day, there are ſo few *Contemplatiues*, is through the want of this practiſe. We find that anciently in thoſe *Monaſteryes* of *Monkes*, there were ſo many perſons of great *Prayer*, and *Contemplation*; and now you ſhall haue difficulty, to find a man of great *Prayer*; and when you ſhall ſpeake to men of *Cõtemplation*, it ſeemes to them, as if you were talking of *Metaphiſicks*, or *Moriſco's*, which is not to be vnderſtood.

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The cauſe hereof is, for that anciently thoſe holy *Monks* did exerciſe themſelues much in *Prayer*; and the young men who entred into thoſe *Monaſteryes*, were preſently tasked, and inſtructed therein, and were made to practiſe it much, as we read in the rule of *S. Pacomius*, & other *Fathers* of thoſe *Monks*. And ſo *Gerſon* giues this aduiſe, as very important, for *Monaſteries*, That they are to haue amongſt them, certayne perſons of ſpirit, who may be learned, and of great practiſe in *Prayer*; and who may inſtruct young men from their very entrance into *Religion*, how they are to exerciſe themſelues in *Prayer*. And our *B. Father*, tooke this Counſell ſo much to hart, & did leaue it ſo well recommended in the *Conſtitutions*, that not only at the firſt, in their houſes of *Nouitiate*, there ſhould be ſome to inſtruct ſuch as enter newly; but in all the *Colledges* alſo, and *Profeſſed Houſes* of the *Society*, he commaunds, that there be a Prefect ouer ſpirituall things, who may attend to this, and obſerue how euery one proceedeth in *Prayer*, for the great importance,

3i p. Conſtit. c. 1. n. 2. & 4. p. c. 10. 7.

tance, wherof he tooke that pointe to be.

Another thing alſo, is to help vs much, towards our continuance in this exerciſe of Prayer, and to perſeuer in it much; and this is, to haue a great *loue* to God, and to ſpirituall things. And ſo ſaid the Royall Prophet; *Quomodo dilexi legem tuam Domine? tota die meditatio mea eſt.* How much, O Lord, do I loue thy Lawe? I am not ſatiſfyed with thinking on it, all day and night. This is my only intertainment and delight. *Et meditabar in mandatis tuis qua dilexi.* So that, if we did loue God much, we alſo would be glad to be thinking of him day and night, and we ſhould not want matter wherof to thinke. Oh with how good a will, doth the mother ſtand thinking of that Childe of her wombe, whome ſhe tenderly loues? And how little need hath ſhe of diſcourſes, or conſiderations, to comfort herſelfe, in the thought of him? If you ſpeake but one word of that Child, her very bowels are inſtantly in a commotion, and the tears of ioy, are ſtreaming downe fro

Pſal. 118. 97.

Pſal. 118. 47.

Note.

her

her eyes, without any more diſcourſes, or conſiderations. Do but begin to talke to a widow of her husband deceaſed, whome ſhe moſt dearly loued, and you ſhall ſee, how inſtantly ſhe will ſigh, and weep.

Now if theſe effects can be wroght, by this naturall kinde of loue; (why do I ſay Naturall loue?) nay if we ſee that the furious loué of ſome loſt and wretched creature, doth carry him ſo abſorpt, and inebriated vpon the perſon whome he loues, as that he ſeemes vnable, euen to thinke of any thing els; how much more ſhould the ſupernaturall Loue of that infinite Goodneſſe, and Beauty of our Lord God, be able to produce theſe effects? For more powerfull is *grace*, then eyther *nature*, or *vice*. If God were all our treaſure, our hart would inſtantly fly vp to him: *Vbi enim eſt theſaurus tuus, ibi eſt & cor tuum.* All the world thinkes willingly of him, whome it loues; and of that, wherein it takes delight. And therfore, the holy ſcripture ſayth, *Guſtauit, & vidit. Guſtate & videte, quoniam ſuauis eſt Dominus.* The *Guſt* may

Mat. 6. 21.

Pro. 31. 18.

Pſa. 31. 9.

may precede the *ſeeing*; but the *ſeeing* cauſeth more *guſte*, and more *loue*. And ſo S. Thomas ſpeaking of this, ſayth: *That Contemplation is the daughter of Loue, becauſe Loue is the roote therof.* And he alſo ſayth, *that Loue is the end of Contemplation; for by the louing of God, a man is inclined to thinke, and contemplate vpon him; and how much more he contemplates, ſo much more he loues him.* For good thinges haue this property, that when they are ſeene, they inuite to loue; & the more we ſe them, the more we loue them; and the more do we ioy, in continuing to ſee, and loue them.

8. Tho. 2. 2. 9. 180. 7. ad. 2.

Chap. XVIII.

It is shewed after a practicall manner, how it is in our power, to pray euer well if we will; and to gather Fruite *from thence.*

THAT moſt excellent, and extraordinary *Prayer*, wherof we ſpake before, is a moſt particuler guifte of God; which he imparteth, not to all, but only to ſuch as it pleaſeth him. But this ordinary, and playne *Mentall Prayer*,

Cap. 4. & ſeqq.

Prayer, wherof now we treat, our Lord denieth to none. And it is the errour of some, that becauſe they obteyne not that other rich *Prayer*, and *Contemplation*, it ſeemes to them, that they cannot pray at all, and that they are not fit, for this holy exerciſe; whereas yet euen this, is a very good, and very profitable kind of *Prayer*, and with it we may become *perfect*. And if our Lord be pleaſed, to impart that other *high* Prayer vnto vs, this inferiour kind of Prayer is a very good, and a very proper diſpoſition, for the obteyning of it. I will therefore now declare how, with the grace of our Lord, it is in our hand to make this Prayer, euer well, and to gather *Fruite* from thence, which is a matter of much comfort.

By two meanes we may very well inferre thus much, vpon that which hath beene ſaid. The firſt is, becauſe the manner of Prayer which our B. *Father* hath taught vs, is to exerciſe therein the *Three powers of our ſoule*; placing, with our *Memory*, before the eyes of our *Vnderſtanding*, the *Point* or *Miſtery*, vpon which we meane to make our Prayer;

Prayer; and then to enter in, with our *Vnderſtanding* it ſelfe, *diſcourſing*, *meditating*, and *conſidering* thoſe things which may ſerue moſt for the mouing of our *Will*; and then are the affects and deſires of the *Will* it ſelfe to follow: and this third, we haue already ſaid, to be the chiefe part, and *Fruite*, which we are to gather from Prayer. So that Prayer, conſiſteth not, in that ſweetnes and ſenſible guſte, which ſometymes we feele, and do experiment within our ſelues; but in the acts which we make, with the *powers of our ſoules*. Now the doing of this, is euer in our power, though we be neuer ſo dry, and diſcomforted. For although I ſhould be more dry then any ſticke, and more hard then any ſtone, yet would it be in my power (with the fauour of our Lord) to make an act of deteſtation, and *griefe* for my ſins; and an act of the *Loue* of God; and an act of *Patience*, and an act of *Humility*; and to deſire to be diſgraced, and deſpiſed, in imitation of Chriſt our Lord, who would needs be diſgraced, and deſpiſed, for loue of me.

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It muſt heere be alſo obſerued, that the buſineſſe of making good Prayer, and the *Fruite* therof, doth not conſiſt, in that one make ſo much as theſe very acts themſelues, with guſte, or ſenſible conſolation; nor in that he feele much, euen of what he is doing; nor doth the goodneſſe and perfection of the *acts* themſelues, nor the merit which followes vpon them, conſiſt in this. This I ſay, is to be noted much. For it vſeth to be an errour, very common to many, who diſcomfort themſelues, as conceauing, that they do no good in *Prayer*, becauſe they feele not ſo much actuall ſorrow for their errours, and ſins, or ſo great affection & deſire of vertue, as they would. But theſe feelings do belong to the *Senſitiue Appetite*; whereas the *Will* is a *ſpirituall Power*, and dependeth not vpon the other. And therefore there is no neceſſity, that a man ſhould feele his owne acts, in ſuch a faſhion; but it ſufficeth that they be produced by the *Will*.

And ſo the Deuines, & Saints who treat of *Contrition*, and *Griefe for ſin*, do

this comfort their penitents: Who comming to make great account of the greuiousnes of mortall sinne, are discomforted, for not being able to dissolue themselues in teares; nor to feele in themselues, that sensible griefe which they desire. For they could find in their harts, that euen their very bowels, might split in their bodyes, for sorrow of their sins. And those Authors say, *That True contrition & griefe, consisteth not in the sensitiue Appetite, but in the Will.* Let it trouble you to haue sinned, because sinne is the offence of God, who is worthy to be loued aboue all things; for this is true *Contrition.* That other *feeling*, when our Lord shall impart it, do you receiue it with giuing of thanks; and when he doth not, be not troubled, for God exacteth not that of you. For it is euident, that he is not to exact that of vs, which is not in our power; and that kind of *feeling*, which you would haue, is a guste and sensible deuotion, which is not in your power. Therfore God expecteth not that of vs, but he expecteth, that which is in our power, which

which is, the *sorrow* of our *Will*, which hath no dependance vpon that other. And the same is to be said of the acts of the *Loue of God*. Loue you God aboue all things, with your *Will*, for this is that strong and *appreciatiue Loue*, and that which God exacteth of vs. That other, is a *tender kind of loue*, which is not in our power. The same is to be said of the acts of other vertues, and of all the good purposes, which we haue.

This truth is clerely seene by the conrrary. For it is most certayne, that if a man do, with his will, desire, and consent to a mortall sinne, although the same man, haue no other feeling nor take no other guste therein, yet he shall sinne mortally, and shall deserue to be condemned for it, to hell. By the same reason, he whose *Will* cõsenteth, and desireth that which is good, although he haue no other guste of feeling of it, shall please almighty God, and merit heauen. Especially since God is more ready to reward vertue, then to punish vice. Nay, many tymes, these acts, are more meritorious, and more acceptable to Note.

God, when they are done, after that dry manner, without guſte, or ſenſible conſolation; becauſe they are more pure, and more durable, & a man placeth in thē more of his owne ſtocke, and he is at more coſt (as a man may ſay) then when he is carried on, by ſenſible deuotion. And ſo it is a ſigne of more ſolide Vertue, and of a *Will* more firme, and faythfull, to the ſeruice of God. For he, who without thoſe helpes of guſtes, and ſpirituall conſolations, doth make thoſe acts; what would he do with them?

M. Auila. Father *Auila* ſayth very well, *That God carryeth the other man, in his armes, as if he were a Child; but this later, goes vpon his owne legs, like a man. Bloſius* ſaith, *That they are like ſuch as ſerue ſome Lord, at their owne charge.* And it importeth much, that we be accuſtomed to pray after this manner. For the moſt vſuall kind of *Prayer* with many, is wont to be in drineſſe; thoſe other, are extraordinary fauours. So that, as men, who goe by *Galleys* in deepe ſeas, when the wind comes to fayle them, do make their way by the force of *Oares*; ſo they who

Bloſius in Monil. Spiritual. c. 3.

who meane to exercise themselues in *Prayer*, when the prosperous winde of the illustrations, and fauours of God, are wanting, must procure to passe on, by the *Oares* of the *Powers of their soule*, which still are helped by the fauour of the *Holy Ghost*, though not alwayes so copiously, as at some tymes.

The secõd way, we may shew thus. *Prayer*, as hath beene sayd, is not the *end*, but a *meanes* which we take for our spirituall profit, and to obteyne victory ouer our passions, and euil inclinations; that so hauing smoothed the way, and remoued all impedimẽts, we may deliuer or selues wholy vp, into the hands of God. When those *Cataracts* were strucken downe, from the eyes of *S. Paules* soule, by that light of heauen, and that diuine voice, which said, *Ego sum Iesus quem tu persequeris*, I am Iesus whome thou persecutest; O how did he remaine, all changed in hart? how truly conuinced, and resolued, and rendred vp to the accomplishment of the will of God? *Domine quid me vis facere?* O Lord, what wilt thou haue me do? This is

Cap. 14. *Act.* 9. 5.

the fruite of good Prayer. And we ſaid
Chap. 18. before, that we muſt not content our ſelues, with drawing certaine generall deſires, and purpoſes out of Prayer; but we muſt deſcend to that particuler, wherof we haue greateſt neede; and we muſt prepare, and prouide our ſelues, to make good vſe of thoſe occaſions, which may, and which vſe to be offered in that preſent day, and to proceed in all things, with edification.

Note. I ſay therfore, (applying the diſcourſe to our purpoſe) that this, by the grace of our Lord, will euer be in our power to do; becauſe we may ſtill be laying hold of thoſe things, wherof we haue moſt need. Let one of you lay hold vpon *Humility*, another vpon *Patience*, another vpon *Obedience*, another vpon *Mortification* and *Reſignation*. And procure to go out of your Prayer, very humble, and very well reſigned, and indifferent, and very deſirous to mortify, and to conforme your ſelues, in all things, with the will of God. And eſpecially procure, alwayes to draw this fruite out of Prayer, that you may liue well that day, and with edifi-

edification of others, euery one according to his estate. And so you shall haue made your Prayer excellently well, yea and better, then if you had shed many tears, and enioyed much consolation.

So that we are not to put our selues in payne, for not being able to vse much discourse, or many considerations, nor to haue other feelings and deuotions; because *Prayer*, doth not consist in this, but in the rest. Neither yet are we to make much account of those *distractions*, and flying thoughts, which vse to disquiet vs in *Prayer*, against our will; wherof yet we do ordinarily complaine. When you reflect and obserue, that you are *distracted*, lay present hold agayne, vpon your matter, and vpon the Fruite, which you are to gather; and therby you shall supply, and reuerse the losse of tyme, which you haue made by that *distraction*, and you shall reuenge your selues on the Diuell, who hath procured to diuert you, by impertinent thoughts. This is a very profitable aduise for *Prayer*. And, as when a Note,

man, who was trauelling with others, laid himselfe downe to sleepe, & his Camerado's passed on; but when he awaked, he made so much haste to ouertake them, that in a quarter of an hower, he dispatched that way, which he was to haue made in a whole one, if he had not fallen asleepe: so when you reflect, and returne to your selues, from your *distraction*, in the last quarter of an hower, you are to carry the matter so well, as to do therein, all that which you were to haue done in the whole hower, if you had continued in attention.

Chap. 14.

Enter presently into account with your selfe and say, *What did I pretend to negotiate with Almighty God, in this Prayer? what was the Fruite, which I had prepared to gather thence?* Humility? Indifferency? Resignation? Conformity with the will of God? *Well yet, I will not faile to fetch this Fruite, out of this Prayer, in despite of the Diuell.* And when perhaps you find, that euen the whole *Prayer* hath gone amisse, and that you haue not gathered the *Fruite* which you desired, you must procure to do

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it, in the *Examen of your Prayer*, whereof we will ſpeake afterward; and therby you are to ſupply, for the faults which you haue made in the *Prayer* it ſelfe, & ſo you ſhall euer gather *Fruite* therby. Chap. 27.

Chap. XIX.

Of ſome eaſy meanes, or wayes, wherby we may haue profitable, and good Prayer.

There are alſo other very eaſy wayes, which will helpe vs much, towards the haning of good Prayer; wherby alſo it will appeare, that it is euer, in our power to haue good, and profitable *Prayer*; and that all, are capable of *Mentall Prayer*, and that there is none, who may not vſe it.

As for the firſt, it is very good to this purpoſe, which is aduiſed by ſome *Maiſters of Spirit*, who ſay, That we muſt not make our Prayer to be a matter of fiction, or art; but we muſt do in that, as men do in buſineſſe of importance, who pawſe to thinke what they are about; and how their buſi-

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neſſe ſpeeds, and how it may be better done. So the ſeruant of God, is playnly, and without tricks, to deale with himſelfe, in point of Prayer, & to ſay, *How goes the buſineſſe forward of the ſpirituall profit, and of the ſaluation of my ſoule?* For this is our *buſineſſe*, and we are not continuing in this life, for any other true reaſon, but only to negotiate this affaire. Let therefore the *religious man* eſpecially, enter into account with himſelfe, & let him thinke thus, at great leaſure. *How goes my ſoule on in this buſineſſe? What fruite haue I gathered in theſe ten, twenty, thirty, or fourty yeares, that I haue beene in Religion? What is that, which I haue gained, or acquired in the vertue of Humility, or Mortification? I will ſee how the accounts do ſtand; and what I can anſwere to God, for all thoſe ſo great meanes, and helpes, which I haue had in Religion, wherewith to thriue, and increaſe the Principall, and Talent, which he gaue me. And if hitherto I haue ill imployed my time, and not knowen how to ſerue my ſelfe therof, I will remedy the fault from henceforth; and certainly, my whole life ſhall not paſſe hereafter, as a great part therof, hath done hitherto.*

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In the ſame manner ought euery one in his condition, with great playneneſſe and ſimplicity, and without all diſguiſe, make a pawſe to thinke in particuler, how it goes with him, in his place and duty; how he ſhalbe able to diſcharge it well, and according to the will of God; how he may carry his buſineſſe like a good Chriſtian, and gouerne his houſe and family, in ſuch ſort, as that all of it, may ſerue God. How he may make right vſe, & beare thoſe difficulties with patience, which his condition, or office carry with it. In this, he will find inough to lament, and to amend. And this wilbe a very good, and a very profitable kind of *Prayer*.

Iohn Gerſon telleth of a ſeruant of God, who was wonte to ſay thus, many tymes. *It is now fourty yeare ſince I haue frequented prayer, with all care I could; and I neuer found a better, nor a more briefe, and compendious meanes, towards the making of good* Prayer, *then to preſent my ſelf, in the preſence of God, like an infant, or like ſome poore blinde, naked, and abandoned beggar.* We ſee that the Prophet *Dauid*, Guliel. Pariſ.

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did vſe this kind of Prayer very often, calling himſelfe ſometymes *a ſicke man*, at other tymes an *orphane*, at other tymes a *blindeman*; and at others, *a poore Creature*, and *a beggar*. And of this, the Pſalmes are full. And we know by experience, that many, who haue vſed, and frequented this kinde of Prayer, haue come, by this meanes, to be indued with very high *Contemplation*. Do you therfore vſe it; and our Lord wilbe pleaſed, that by this meanes, you ſhall obteyne, what you deſire.

Note. The Prayer of the *Beggar*, is a very good Prayer. Conſider, ſayth *Gerſon*, with how great humility and patience the poore man ſtands expecting a litle almes, at the rich mans doore; and with what diligence he goes, where he knowes, there is any almes to be giuen. And as this poore and naked, forſakē creature, ſtands before the rich-man, asking him almes, and hoping for the remedy of his neceſſity, with great humility, and reuerence; ſo are we to place our ſelues, before God in Prayer, repreſenting to him our Pouerty,

Gerſon de monte contemplat.

uerty, our neceſſity, and our miſery; & hoping for ſome remedy therof, at the hands of his liberality and bounty. *Sicut oculi ancillæ in manibus Dominæ ſuæ, ita oculi noſtri, ad Dominũ Deum noſtrum, donec miſereatur noſtri.* As the eyes of the ſlaue, ſtand hanging vpon the hands of her Lord, expecting what he will beſtow vpon her; ſo are our eyes to be hanging & depending vpon our Lord God, till ſuch tyme, as we may obteyne mercy of him. *Pſa. 122. 2.*

We find in that ſtory, which is recounted of the Abbot *Paphnutius*, who liued in the moſt inward part of the deſert, how that hauing heard of that looſe woman *Thais*, that ſhe was the ſnare and perdition of many ſoules, and the cauſe alſo of many quarrels, and the death of many; he did with deſire to conuert her, and drawe her to God, take the habit of a ſecular man, and money, and he went to the Citty, where ſhe dwelt, and conuerted her. And he tooke the occaſion, from ſome words of hers, when (he ſeeming to deſire, that ſhe would allow him ſome more priuate place) *Pratum ſpirituale.*

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[illegible] said, *Thou art safe inough heere, from the eyes of men, who cannot see the heere; From the eyes of God, indeed, thou canst not hide thy selfe, how secret soeuer the place may be.* The story is large; but to come to that which makes to our purpose.

The woman being conuerted, he conducted her to the wildernesse, and did shut her vp into a cell; and made it fast with a seale of leade, leauing only an ouerture, in a very little window which there was, to the end that daily they might therby, giue her a little bread, and water. And *Paphnutius*, leauing her, she asked him only, how she was to pray to God. To this, the holy *Abbot* answered: *Thou doest not deserue to take the Name of God into that impure mouth of thine, but the manner of thy Prayer shalbe this: Thou shalt put thy selfe vpon thy knees; and thou shalt turne thy selfe towards the East; and thou shalt repeat these words many tymes, Qui plasmasti me, miserere mei*; O thou who madest me, haue mercy on me. In this manner she continued three years, without euer presuming to take the name of God into her mouth; but alwayer

carrying

carrying her many grieuous sinnes before her sight, and demaunding mercy and pardon for them of our Lord, in those words which the Saint had taught her.

And this Prayer, was so acceptable to Almighty God, that the *Abbot Paphnutius*, demaunding of the blessed *Saint Anthony*, at the end of those three years, if he thought that God had pardoned her sinnes; *S. Anthony* called his Monks about him, and required them, that euery one should remaine all the next night following by himselfe, in *Watching* and *Prayer*; to the end that our Lord might declare that to some one of them, which was demaunded by *Paphnutius*. Being therefore all, in Prayer, *Paul* the *monke*, who was the chiefe amongst the disciples of *S. Anthony*, had a vision of a bed in heauen, adorned with most pretious furniture; and which was attended by foure virgins. As soone as he saw so rich an obiect, he instantly said within himselfe: This grace and fauour cannot be reserued for any other, then for my father *S. Anthony*. As he was in those thoughts,

voice descended from heauen and said, *This bed of glory, is not prepared for thy Father Anthony, but for Thais the sinner.* And fifteene dayes after, our Lord was pleased to carry her to enioy that glory, or celestiall bed of state. Do you the while, content your selues, with making this *Prayer*, & know that you deserue to make no other. And perhaps you may please God more by this, then if you made that other, which you imagine.

In a certayne spirituall Discourse which is a manuscript, made by a religious *Monke* of the *Carthusians*, concerning *spirituall Communion*, he recounteth a certayne passage of our B. *F. Ignatius*, and his companions, which he affirmeth himselfe to haue vnderstood, from a person worthy to haue beene beleiued. How that, whilst they were trauelling as they vsed to do on foote, with their little bags, and such like necessaryes, vnder their armes; and going towards *Barselona*, there was a good honest man, trauelling also in the same way, who saw them, and tooke pitty of them, & be-

sought

ſought them, with great inſtance, that they would giue him their little bags, ſaying that he was luſty, and ſtrong, and would carry them well. And although they refuſed to do ſo, yet at laſt, being importuned, they were content; and ſo, went on, their way, all together. Whē they arriued at their lodging, the *Fathers*, euery one of them, did procure to find out his corner, to recollect, and commend himſelfe to God, in *Prayer*. That other honeſt man, ſeeing them do ſo, did procure a corner alſo for himſelfe, and caſt himſelfe downe vpon his knees, like them. And proceeding afterward in their way, they asked him once: *Brother, what do you vſe to do, in that corner of yours?* He anſwered. *That which I do, is to ſay, O Lord theſe men are ſaints, and I am but their beaſt. Looke what they do, and that will I alſo do. And this* (ſayth he) *am I offering vp to God.* And the Story further ſayth that the good man did profit ſo much, by meanes of this *Prayer*, that he grew to be a very ſpirituall perſon, and to be of *high Prayer*, afterward. Now who is he, that cannot vſe

this forme of *Prayer*, if he will?

My selfe did know a very ancient *Father* of the *Society* of *Iesus*, and a very great Preacher, whose *Prayer*, for a long tyme, was to say, with much humility, and simplicity, to Almighty God: *O Lord, I am but a beast, and know not how to vse Prayer, do thou teach it me, O Lord.* With this he profited much, & grew to haue most *high Prayer*; that of the Prophet, being accomplished in him, *Vt iumentum factus sum, & ego semper tecum.* Do you therfore humble your selues, & become, in the sight of God, as if you were but poore beasts, and our Lord wilbe with you. It doth much import in the sight of God, that one do humble himselfe; for great matters are negotiated, and obteyned in this manner, at the hands of his diuine Maiesty. And heere the Saints do note a thing of much importace, That as *Humility* is the meanes to obteyne *Prayer*, so *Prayer* must be the meanes to obteyne *Humility*, and to go increasing in it.

Psal. 72.23

Note.

And so they say, that when a man hath made good *Prayer*, he euer goes a way

way much humbled and confounded? Whereupon it followes, that when a man parteth well contented from his *Prayer*, with I know not what kind of vaine complacence, & a close kind of estimation, and reputation of himselfe; conceiuing, forsooth, that he hath profitted much, and that already he is growing a kind of spirituall man, that Prayer deserues to be suspected. And therfore, if you say that you are not able to draw many considerations out of *Prayer*, nor to haue any high *Contemplations*, let your course, be to humble your selfe, and gather that *Fruite* from your *Prayer*, and you can haue no excuse, for not doing that; & euen that wilbe a very good Prayer. *Greg. l. 2. in Ezech. hom. 17. Chrysost. ho. 4. de pœn. to. 5.*

It is also a very good meanes, when a man is not able to enter *Prayer*, and that he is in conflict with many thoughts, and temptations, to do that which Father *Auila* doth thus aduise, in one of his letters: *Cast your selues at the feete of Christ our Lord, and say; O Lord forasmuch as this distraction, and difficulty in Prayer, proceeds from any fault of mine, I am hartily sory for it; but forasmuch as is* Note. *M. Auila l. 1. Epist.*

therein, of thy will, and of thy punisment, I haue iuſtly deſerued it, for my great ſinnes paſt. And for my great negligence and errours preſent, I do accept it with a very good will, and I am glad to receiue from thy holy hand, this croſſe, this dryneſſe, this diſtraction, this diſcomfort, and this ſpirituall deſolation. This *Patience*, and this *Humility*, wilbe a very good Prayer, and will pleaſe God more, then the Prayer which you deſired to haue, as we ſhall afterwards ſhew more at large.

Tract. 8. cap. 26.

P. Fran. de Borgia.

It is written of our Father *Franciſcus de Boria*, how when it ſeemed to him, that he had not had good Prayer, that day did he procure to mortify himſelfe more, and to goe with more care, and diligence in all his workes, therby to ſupply the fault of his Prayer; and ſo he Counſelleth vs to do. This is a very good meanes to ſupply the fault of Prayer, yea & it wilbe alſo a good meanes to make our Prayer good. *S. Nilus* the *Abbot*, ſpeaking of Prayer ſayth, That as when we diſorder, and diſcompoſe our ſelues in the day, it ſeemes that preſently we ſhall feele the puniſhment of it in our Prayer,

Note.

Prayer, for there, God sheweth vs some hard countenance: so on the other side, when we haue mortifyed, and ouercome our selues, in things of difficulty, we do instantly also find it, in our Prayer; for our Lord is pleased to reward vs, with ready payment. *Quidquid durum & asperum patienter tolerabis, fructum laboris, tempore orationis reperies.*

The Saint doth therupon, giue a very good aduise, for the hauing of good Prayer, and of very good conformity, with that which we haue already said. *Si orare desideras, nihil facias eorum, quæ orationi aduersantur, vt tibi appropinquet Deus, & tecum ambulet.* If you desire to haue good Prayer, do nothing which may be contrary to Prayer, and by this meanes God will communicate himselfe to you, and do you many fauours. *Nilus de oratione c. 17. & 62. in biblio. sanctorum Patrum. tom. 3.*

And generally, let all men vnderstand, that the principall care which the seruant of God ought to haue, is to cleanse and mortify his hart, and to keepe himselfe free from all sinne, and to be very firme and resolute, not to Note.

commit one mortall ſinne, for the whole world. Herein he is to ground himſelfe well, whileſt he is in Prayer and to inſiſt and actuate vpon it, very often; for we haue need to do ſo, as long as we are in this miſerable life. And vpon this foundation, euery mā may build aſmuch perfectiō as he will. And therfore he hath no reaſon to go vp and downe with complaints, but to be very gratefull to God, although he giue him no other kind, of higher Prayer. For Sanctity, conſiſteth not in hauing to guift of Prayer, but in doing the will of God. *Deum time, & mādata eius obſerua: hoc eſt enim omnis homo.* With this ſaying, *Salomon* concludeth that high ſermon of *Eccleſiaſtes*. *Feare God and keep his Commaundements, for all man is but this.* That is to ſay: *In this cōſiſteth all the felicity of man; and by this he complyeth with all his obligations; and with this, he may be holy, and perfect.*

Eccl. 12. 13.

Note.

I will conclude, with aſſigning a meanes for good Prayer, which ſhalbe of much comfort for all men. When you do not find in your Prayer, that eaſe, that attention, and deuotion, &

that

internall vnion which you wiſh, exerciſe your ſelues, in hauing a great inclination and deſire to it; & with this you ſhall ſupply that which you conceiue to be wanting to you. For our Lord God (as the Saints affirme) is no leſſe content, and ſatisfyed, with that good deſire, and will of yours, then he would be with your high, and ſublyme Prayer. *Deus, non minùs voluntate ſanctoq; deſiderio lætatur, quàm ſi tota anima amore liquefacta, plenè ſibi iungeretur.* This helpe, God taught to the holy virgin *Gertrude*, and it is related by *Bloſius*. He ſayth, that the Saint complayning of her wants, and that ſhe could not in in Prayer, rayſe her hart ſo high, as ſhe deſired, and as ſhe thought ſhe was obliged, ſhe was taught from heauen, that with God it was ſufficient, if the man did indeed deſire, and wiſh, that he had a great deſire of it, when yet perhaps he feeled very little, or no deſire at all. For iuſt ſo great, is a good deſire eſteemed to be, in the ſight of God, as the mã, would fayne haue it great. And he ſaith: *That in a hart which hath ſuch a deſire* (that is to ſay) *which hath*

F. Barth. de los martyris Arche. Bracharẽſis in ſuo compendio ſpirituali c. 19. fol. 250.

Bloſius &c. 2. cæm outlis ſpiritual.

a deſire, and will, to haue this deſire, God dwelleth with a better will, then a man would be glad to ſtay, amongſt fresh, and odoriferous flowers.

God hath no need of your high Praier, he deſirs nothing but your hart; to that he lookes, and he receyues the *deſires* thereof, for *deeds*. And ſo, agreably to this, it wilbe a very good deuotion, and a very profitable conſideration, when we find our ſelues tepide & dry in Prayer, to cõſider how many ſeruants of God there are in Prayer ouer the world, at the very ſame tyme perhaps ſhedding tears, and peraduenture bloud, and we may imagine our ſelues, to be with them; and not only with them, but euen with the Angells, & other celeſtiall ſpirits, louing & praiſing God. And we may remit our ſelues to that which they do; & ſupply therby, the want of that which we cãnot do our ſelues; repeating many times with our harrs, and with our mouthes, thoſe words: *Cum quibus, & noſtras voces, vt admitti iubeas deprecamur, ſupplici confeſsione dicentes, Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus &c.* O Lord that which they ſay,

Note.

ſay, I ſay; and that which they do, I would faine do; & iuſt as they praiſe and loue, ſo would I fayne bleſſe, and prayſe, and loue thee. And ſometymes it wilbe alſo good, that we remit our ſelues, euen to our ſelues, as we were at ſome former tyme, when we conceiue our ſelues to haue beene in good *Prayer*, ſaying: *O my Lord, that which I did then, and as then I offered my ſelfe wholy to thee; ſo do I offer my ſelfe now: and as then I grieued for my ſins, ſo do I grieue now; and as then I deſired Humility, Patience, and Obedience, in the ſame manner, O Lord, do I craue, and beg it of thee now.*

But aboue all, it is a moſt ſingular good practiſe, to vnite our workes with thoſe of Chriſt our Lord, and to ſupply our faults & imperfections by the merits of his moſt ſacred *Paſsion*; aſwell in that which concerneth our *Prayer*, as in our other actions; offering to the eternall Father, our *Prayers*, in vnion of the loue and feruour, wherewith Chriſt our Lord did pray to him, and praiſe him here on earth; and our *Faſts*, in vniō of thoſe *Faſts*, which he

he made, beſeeching him that he wilbe pleaſed to ſupply our *Impatience*, with the *Patience* of Chriſt our Lord; our *pride* with his *Humility*; and our *Malice*, with his *Innocency*. This practiſe (as *Bloſius* relateth) was reuealed by our Lord to ſome deare ſeruants of his, to the end, that we may ſo make our workes of much worth, and merit, & relieue our pouerty, by his meanes; through the infinite treaſure, of the merits of Chriſt our Lord.

Bloſius c. 9. inſtitut. ſpiritual.

Chap. XX.

That we muſt content our ſelues with this Prayer, *wherof we haue ſpoken; and not goe with complaint, and griefe, for not being able to obtayne that other* Prayer, *which is more high.*

Albertus magnus de adhærendo Deo.

Albertus Magnus ſayth, that the true humble man, doth not preſume to lift vp his hart, to a deſire of that high and rich *Prayer*, and of thoſe extraordinary fauours, which our Lord doth vſe, ſometymes, to cõmunicate to his deare ſeruants. For he eſtee-

Note.

esteemeth so little of himselfe, that he holdeth himselfe vnworthy of all fauour, and spirituall consolation. And if at any tyme, without any desire of his, our Lord do visite him, with any comfort; he receiueth it with feare, acknowledging that he deserueth not those visitations; and that he knowes not, how to profit by them, as he ought. And if we had true *Humility*, we would content our selues, with any of those kinds of Prayer, wherof we spake. Nay rather, we should hold it for a particuler fauour of our Lord, that he leades vs, by the way of *Humility*. For therby, we shall conserue our selues; and by that other way, we might perhaps, growe light-headed, and so be lost.

S. Bernard sayth, that God doth carry himselfe towards vs, as the Fathers of this world do, towards their little children. That when the Childe asketh bread, they giue it him with a good will; but when the Child asketh for a knife, wherewith to cut his bread, they will not giue it him; because they see it is not necessary, and that

Bern. ser. 5. quadrag.

Note.

that perhaps, it might do him hurt, by cutting his fingers. But the father takes the knife, and cuts the bread, that ſo the child may neither be put to any trouble, nor made ſubiect to any danger. In this ſorte doth our Lord proceed. He giues you the bread, already cut; and will not giue you thoſe guſts, and conſolations, which are in that moſt high *Prayer*; becauſe perhaps, you would cut your ſelues; & they would do you hurt, by making you wanton, and guiddy, and to hold your ſelues for ſpirituall perſons, and to prefer your ſelues before others. Our Lord doth you a greater fauour, in giuing you the *bread* already cut, then if he gaue you the *knife*, wherewith to cut it. If God, with your *Prayer*, giue you a great reſolution, and ſtrength, rather to dy, then to commit ſinne; and if he keepe you, through the whole courſe of your life, without committing a mortall ſinne, what better *Prayer*, and what better *Fruite* can you deſire, then this?

This is that anſwere, which the *Father* of the *Prodigall Sonne* gaue to his *elder*

der brother. Who seing that the *Younger* was receiued with so much feasting and ioy, was deepely offended with it, and already was refusing to enter into his *Fathers* house, saying to this effect; *So many years are now past, since I serue you, and haue euer beene subiect to your commaundements, and obsequious to your person, and you haue neuer bestowed vpon me, so much as a Kid, to the end that I might make merry with my friends. And as for that other, who hath dissipated your state, and beene disobedient to your selfe, you haue killed the fat calfe, and made him a sumptuous banquet, with great musique, and ioy.* The Father makes this answere. *Fili, tu semper mecum es.* My sonne, know that I do not this, as louing the other, more then you: *You are euer remaining in my house, and with my person. It will also be reason, that you know and esteeme worthily, of that which I do for you. Is it perhaps a small grace and fauour, which I do you, in continuing you euer, about my selfe?* Luc. 15. 31.

. The same I say in your case. Doth it seeme a trifle, for our Lord to keepe you euer with himselfe, and in his house? It is a greater matter, for our Lord,

Lord to giue you the guift of perſeuerance, and to keepe you, from euer parting from him, and falling into ſin; then if, after you were fallen, he ſhould lend you his hand, as he did to the *Prodigall Sonne*. It is more for him, to keepe you, from breaking your head, then if he ſhould heale it, when it were broken. If then our Lord, with this *Prayer* which you haue, do giue you this, of what can you complayne? If with this *Prayer*, he giue you great promptitude towards al things which concerne his ſeruice, and great indifferency, with intiere reſignation towards all the orders of *Obedience*, what can you deſire more? If with this *Prayer*, God conſerue you in *Humility*, and in his feare, and in walking warily, and in preſerruing your ſelues from occaſions, & out of the dangers of ſinne, what reaſon haue you to ſigh for more? This is that *Fruite* which you were to gather out of *Prayer*, if it were neuer ſo high and ſublyme. And when, our Lord were pleaſed, to giue you many guſts and comforts in it, to this end you were to addreſſe thē all.

Now

Now this is that, which God doth worke in this playne, and ordinary Prayer. He giueth you the end, and the *Fruite*, without thoſe extraordinary meanes of eleuations, and guſts, and conſolations; as they find by experience, who perſeuere in it. And therfore we are to giue, for this, double thanks to our Lord. For, on the one ſide, he frees vs from the danger of vanity, and pride, which we might be ſubiect to; and on the other ſide, he giues vs that *Fruite*, and profit of Prayer, which is moſt complete. The holy Scripture ſaith, of the holy Patriarch *Ioſeph*, *That he ſpake to his brethren, with hard, and sharpe words; and yet withall that he filled their ſacks, full of corne; and commaunded his Steward, to treat them well.* And ſo doth our Lord carry himſelfe many tymes towards vs. Gen. 42. 7. & 25.

We will neuer vnderſtand, as we ought, wherein Prayer, doth indeed conſiſt. Or to ſpeake more properly, we will neuer vnderſtand, as we ought, wherein our ſpirituall profit & perfection doth conſiſt, which is the *End* and *Fruite*, to which our Prayer is ordey-

ordeyned. And ſo, many tymes, when it goes ill with vs, we thinke it goes well; and when indeed it goeth well, we are apt to thinke, that it goeth ill. Drawe you, out of Prayer, that which we haue ſaid; and eſpecially to proceed well that preſent day, and with edification, as was touched before; and you ſhall haue made good Prayer; though whilſt you were praying, you were as dry as a ſticke, and as hard as a ſtone. And if you gaine not this, you haue not made good *Prayer*, though you were ſtreaming downe teares, all the while, and although you had beene eleuated vp to the third heauen.

Chap. 15.

Henceforward therfore, do not complayne of *Prayer*, but turne your complaints againſt your ſelues, and ſay, *It goes ill with me, in point of Mortification. It goes ill with me in point of Humility; in point of Patience; in point of Silence, and Recollection.* This indeed, is a iuſt complaynt, becauſe it is to complayne againſt your ſelues; for you do [illegible] that which you ought; and yet it is in your owne power. But that other courſe, of going in complaynt againſt

Note.

againſt Prayer, ſeemes to be a kinde of complayning againſt God, becauſe he giues not that kinde of way, and quietnes, and comfort, which you could deſire. This I ſay, is no good complainte. *It is no word, this, which may induce our Lord to mercy, but rather prouoke him, to wrath, and indignation,* as the holy *Iudith*, ſaid to them of *Bethulia. Non eſt iſte ſermo, qui miſericordiam prouocet, ſed potius qui iram excitet, & furorem accendat.* And it is worth the conſidering, how contrary we are in this, to reaſon. For I find not, that we complayne of not being willing to mortify, nor humble, nor amēd our ſelues; which yet is the thing that we haue in our power. But we go complayning of that, which is not in our power, but runns vpon the accounte of Almighty God. Endeauour you to mortify, and ouercome your ſelues, & herein do that, which belongs to you, and truſt God with that which belongs to him. For more deſire hath he, of our good, then we our ſelues. And if we do that which belongs to vs, we may reſt ſecure inough, that, for

Iudith 8. 11.

Note.

Tract. 8. Ca. 24. & seqq. & vide supra Cap. 5. ad finem ex Bernardo.

his part, he will not be wanting, to giue vs that which is fit for vs. We will speake more largly of this pointe, when we treate of *Conformity with the will of God*; where we will procure to giue more expresse satisfaction, to this complaint, and temptation.

Chap. XXI.

Of the causes of Distraction in Prayer, and of the Remedies.

Cassianus collat. 9. 7.

THIS is wonte to bea very ordinary complaint, and therfore the *Saints* do generally treate therof, and especially *Cassian*. They say, that *distraction in Prayer*, may rise from one of three causes. The first, our owne carelessnesse, or negligence; becausse we go scattered in our owne thoghts, and we set little guard vpon our hart; and make little recolection of our senses. He who liueth in this manner, hath no reason to wonder, how he comes to be be *distracted* in *Prayer*, and why he can make no way in it. For it is cleere, that the *images*, and *figures*, and

Note.

repre-

representations of those things which he suffers to enter in, are to disquiet and molest him afterwards in *Prayer*.

The Abbot *Moyses* sayth well, *That although it is not in the power of a man to keepe himselfe from being surprised with thoughts, yet, that it is in his power, eyther not to admit thē, or els to driue them away.* And he addeth further, *that it is in great part in our power to correct and mend the quality of those thoughts*; and to cause that they may be holy, & good, & that those others which are impertinent, & vayne, may grow by little & little to be forgottē. For if he giue himselfe to the spirituall Exercises of *Reading*, *Meditation*, and *Prayer*; if he imploy himselfe vpon good and holy workes, he wilbe sure to haue good, and holy thoughts. But if, when he spends the day, he do but feed his senses with vaine, and impertinent things; his thoughts will not faile to be of the same quality. Collat. 1.

To this purpose he bringeth a comparison, and it is also brought by Saint *Anselme*, and S. *Bernard*. These Saints affirme, that the hart of man is like a *Milstone*, which is euer mouing; but it is Collat. 1. cap. 18. Note

in the hand of the *Miller*, who rules it, to chooſe whether it ſhall *grinde* wheate, or oates, or any other graine; for that which they caſt before it, it will grinde. And ſo the hart of man, cannot be without thinking vpon ſomewhat, which it will grinde; but by your induſtry, and diligence, you may make it grind what corne you will, wheat, or rye, yea or earth it ſelfe; for in fine, whatſoeuer you caſt before it, that will it grinde. In conformity therfore of this, if you meane to be recolected in *Prayer*, you muſt procure, as you conuerſe, to carry you hart recollected, and to keep the gates of your ſenſes cloſe. For our Lord takes pleaſure to treat with ſoules, which are, as *Gardens ſhut*.

And ſo, it was a common ſaying of thoſe ancient Fathers, and it is alledged by *Caſsian*, *Quales orantes volumus inueniri, tales nos, ante orationis tempus, preparare debemus; ex præcedenti enim ſtatu, mens atque animus, in ſupplicatione formatur.* We muſt go backe againe, to begin our courſe, and procure to be, when we are out of *Prayer*, ſuch as in

Caſsianus collat. 9. Abbatis Iſaac. c. 1.

Note.

Prayer

Prayer we desire to be. For of the same state and temper, which the hart shall haue out of Prayer, the same it will also haue in Prayer. *Qualis liquor vasi infunditur, taliter redolebit; & quales herbas in horto cordis tui plantaueris, talia semina germinabunt,* sayth *S. Bonauenture.* Such as the liquour is, which you powre into the vessell, such wilbe the smell; & such as the hearbs shalbe, which you plant in the garden of your hart, such will the fruite, and seed be, which is produced therby. *Bonauent. de profectu religiosi li. 2. c. 58.*

And because it is an vsuall, and naturall thing, for a man to thinke much of that, which he loues; if you desire to keepe your harte firme, and stable in tyme of Prayer, and that your thoughts of vayne, and impertinent things, may growe into obliuion, and to an end; you must mortify your loue therof, despising all earthly things, & you must lodge your hartes in heauen. And how much the more you shall profit, and increase in this; so much the more shall you increase, and profit in stability, attention, and deuotion in Prayer.

Secondly, *Distraction* vseth to grow, from the temptatiōs of our enemy the Diuell. *S. Basil* sayth, That the diuell, seing our Prayer to be the meanes wherby all good cōmeth to vs, procures by all wayes possible, to hinder vs, and diuert vs therein; to the end, that, hauing depriued vs of this succour, he may the more easily find entrance into our soules, for his temptations and deceits. He carrieth himselfe towards vs, as the Captaine of *Holofernes* did, for the taking of the Citty of *Bethulia*, which defended it selfe against him. For he *brake the Conduites wherby water was conueyed into the Citty.* And so the diuell doth procure, with all diligence, to disorder, and breake in vs, this *Aqueduct* of Prayer, wherby the water of grace, and of all spirituall good is deriued into our soules. And *S. Iohn Climacus* sayth, that as vpon the ringing of the bell, Faythfull Christians and *Religious men*, do visibly assemble themselues to make Prayer, & to praise our Lord; so our enemyes who are the diuells, do also associate themselues inuisibly, to tempt, & hinder vs from Prayer.

Basil. ser de renunciatione sæculi & spirit. perfect. Cassian. 10. ca 10. & Nilus. 44 & 47. de oratione.

Note.

Iudith 7. 6.

Climacus gra. 18.

In

In the *Pratum ſpirituale*, it is recounted of one of thoſe Fathers of the *deſert*, that riſing one night to Prayer, and ſinging of *Pſalmes*, as his cuſtome was, he heard the ſound of a trumpet, which was like the ſigne of giuing a battell. And the holy old man being troubled at it, and wondring from whence that noiſe might come, into ſo ſollitary a place, where there was no war, nor no ſouldiers; the Diuell appeared to him, and ſaid, that although he thought that there was no battell towards, yet indeed there was; and that the trumpet ſhewed that the diuells were about to begin it, againſt the ſeruants of God; and that if he deſired to be free from it, he ſhould returne to take his reſt, and if not, that he was to looke to himſelfe. But he, confiding in our Lord, did enter into his Prayer, and continued in it. *De Abbat. Marcell.*

One of the things wherby the excellency, and great importance of Prayer may be particulerly well deſcerned, is the watchfull and curſt eye which the diuell carrieth towards it, and the continuall warre, which he

Nilus ca. 44. & 47. de oratione. & ca. 100 & seqq. refer. aliqua Exempla circa hoc in biblio. Sanctorum PP. Tom 3.

makes against it, as the holy *Abbot Nilus* noteth very well. There be other good workes, which the diuell is better content to passe withall, and to endure. He will permit sometymes, a *fast*, a *discipline*, and a *hayrecloth*, but a tyme of *Prayer* he cannot endure; but by all possible meanes, he procures to hinder it.

From hence it growes, that when we are in Prayer, we suffer many tymes more temptations, then in any other action of ours. It seemes that then, the whole troupe of thoughts set vpon vs, and sometymes they are so filthy, and so wicked, as if we went not so much thither to pray to God, as to be molested and vexed, with all kinde of temptations by the Diuell. For things which before did neuer present themselues to vs, nor neuer passed by our thoughts, in our whole life, do offer themselues to vs in Prayer; as if they kept themselues of purpose for vs, against that tyme. And since the Diuell knowes, that Prayer is the redresse of all our miseryes, and the beginning, and fountaine of all our spiri-

Note.

ſpirituall good, and an efficacious meanes for the obteyning of all vertue, it puts him to much payne, and he imployeth all the power he hath to hinder it. And ſo the Saints are wont to call Prayer, *Tormentum Dæmonum*, & *flagellum Dæmonum*. The torment, and the ſcourge of the Diuell.

This very thing ought to be a cauſe, and motiue to vs, to make vs more to eſteeme, and more diligently to frequent the vſe of Prayer: and ſo much the more, becauſe the Diuell, out of a meere enuy which he beares vs, ſeekes to hinder vs. *S. Thomas* of *Auila* and other graue Authors affirme, that for this very reaſon, our Holy Mother the *Church* who is gouerned by the *Holy Ghoſt*, and knoweth well, that the cuſtome of our enemy, is to tempt, and make all the war he can vpon them who are in Prayer; hath ordeyned, that at the beginning of euery one of her Canonicall howers, this verſe be ſaid: *Deus in adiutorium meum intende: Domine ad adiuuandum me feſtina.* Where we deſire fauour of our Lord, that he will enable vs to pray as we

Thomas Abulenſis.

Note.

Pſal. 69. 2.

Note. we ought, and defend vs from the ambushes, and temptations of our enimies.

Thirdly, these vayne thoughts, and *Distractions*, do sometymes grow vpō vs in Prayer, without any fault of ours, and only out of our very infirmity and weakenesse. For we are so fraile, and miserable, and our nature doth remaine so totally disordered, & decayed by sinne, and especially our *imagination*, that we can scarce say a *Pater noster*, but diuers thoughts wilbe offering at vs, according to the complaint of *S. Bernard*. For this, it wilbe a good remedy, that we take for the subiect of our *Prayer*, the consideration of that thing, which makes vs suffer, and so to humble our selues, by the knowledge and sense of our owne great misery. For this *Humility*, & this *knowledge of our selues*, wilbe a very good *Prayer*: though yet besides, we will speake of some other remedyes, which are giuen by the Maisters of spirituall life, and other holy men.

CHAP.

Chap. XXII.

Of other remedies, for the making vs remaine with attention, and reuerence, in our Prayer.

THE blessed *S. Basil*, asketh how a man may growe to haue a firme, and attentiue hart in Prayer; and he answeareth, that the most efficacious meanes for this, is to consider, that he is in *the presence of God*; & that God is looking how he prayes. For if here, a man standing before a Prince, and speaking with him, do carry himselfe with great respect, & reuerence; and do apply great attention to what he doth, and to the manner & fashion which he holds therein; and should esteeme it for an act of great ill-manners in himselfe, to turne his back towards the Prince, yea or yet to vse any impertinent discourse with him: what shall that man do, who attentiuely considereth, that he stands in presence of the Maiesty of God; and that he is looking on; and that not only vpon the

Basilius in regulis breuioribus 201. & 306. & in constitutionibus ad solitarios.

the exterior, but vpon the moſt ſecret, and internall parte of his hart. Who (ſayth he) is that man, that ſhall preſume to diuert his eyes, and his hart, from that which he is doing; and ſhall aduenture to turne his backe to God, and paſſe his thoughts, in that place, towards impertinent things?

That great *Monke Iacob*, as *Theodoret* recounts, doth vſe this following conſideration, to ſhew what a great irreuerence this would be, and it is alſo alledged by *S. Auguſtine*. If I (ſaid he) were the ſeruant of a man, who is alſo of the ſame nature with my ſelfe; and at the tyme when I were to ſerue him, ſhould leaue to bring him his dinner, through the will which I might haue to be talking with ſome fellow-ſeruant of mine; my Maiſter might reprehend, and puniſh me, with iuſt reaſon. And if being before a Iudge, to complayne of ſome body, who had done me wrong, I ſhould leaue him, euen as the word were in my mouth; and ſhould turne my backe towards him, and ſtand talking with others who were there; do you not thinke, that

Theodoret. in hiſtoria Sanctorum Patrum c. 21.

Auguſt. ſuper Pſa. 85.

that he would take me, to be a rude fellowe, and commaund me to be caſt out of the *Tribunall*, where he were giuing ſentence? Now this is that which they do, who going to treat with God in *Prayer*, do yet diſtract themſelues, by thinking of impertinent things. Our *B. Father* preſcribeth alſo this helpe, which followes, in one of the *Additions*, or *Aduertiſements*, which he ſets downe for *Prayer*. Where he ſayth, that immediatly before we enter into Prayer, we ſhould, for the ſpace of a *Pater noſter*, lift vp our ſpirit to heauen, and conſider that the ſame God is preſent with vs heere; and that he is looking vpon vs, and that ſo, we ſhould begin our Prayer, with great humility and reuerence. And we are to procure, that this *Preſence of God*, be not loſt by vs in the whole tyme of our *Meditation*, according to that of the *Prophet: Et meditatio cordis mei, in conſpectu tuo ſemper.*

Ignatius lib. exercitiorum ſpiritualium

Pſa. 18 15.

S. Chryſoſtome ſayth: *Make account that when you go to Prayer, you are entring into that celeſtiall Court, where the king of glory is ſeated, in heauen, which is all imbro-*

Chryſoſt. ſuper illud Pſal. 4. Miſerere mei, & exaudi orationem meam.

dered

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Chryſoſt. ſuper illud Pſal. 4. Miſerere mei, & exaudi orationem meam.

dered with ſtars, and that King inuironed with innumerable angells and Saints, & that they all ſtand, beholding vs, according to that of S. Paul: *Spectaculum facti ſumus mundo & angelis & hominibus.* S. Bernard counſelleth how we are to carry our ſelues herein. *Veniens ad Eccleſiam; pone manum tuam ſuper os tuum, & dic: Expectate hic cogitationes, malæ intentiones, & affectus cordis, & appetitus carnis: tu autem anima mea, intra in gaudium Domini Dei tui, vt videas voluptatem Domini, & viſites templum eius.* Whē thou ſhalt enter into the Church, and recolect thy ſelfe towards Prayer, lay thy hand vpon thy mouth, & ſay: Stay you here at the gate, you diſordered thoughts, and appetites; & thou O my ſoule, enter into the ioy of thy Lord, that thou maiſt ſee, and do his holy *will.*

1. Cor. 4. 9.

Bernardus. Climacus in ſcala ſpirituali gradu. 4. §. 18.

S. Iohn Climacus, ſayth; *That he who when he is in* Prayer *conſidereth in good earneſt, that he is ſtanding in the preſence of God,* is a firme & cōſtant pillar, which cannot *be moued.* And he relates, how that ſeeing, at a certayne tyme, a *Religious mā,* who was more attentiue then the reſt, in the ſinging of *Pſalmes*, and

that

that especially, at the beginning of the *Hymns* he seemed, by the manner and countenance which he held, as if he had beene speaking with another, he desired him afterward, that he would tell him, what the matter was. The monke made him this answere: *At the beginning of the diuine Office, I am wont to recollect my hart, and thoughts, with great care; and calling them before me, I vse to say; Venite adoremus, & procidamus, & ploremus ante Dominũ qui fecit nos, quia ipse est Dominus Deus noster, nos autẽ populus eius, & oues pascuæ eius.* Come let vs adore and prostrate our selues, let vs weepe before our Lord; because he is our Lord, and our God, and we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. All these cõsiderations are very profitable, and good, to make vs pray with reuerence, and attention. Psa. 94. 6.

Others giue this remedy; to put our selues before the *B. Sacramẽt*, if we be in place where we may do it. Or if not, to be as neere the *B. Sacrament* as we can, and there to lodge our hart. It is also good, to haue an eye vpon holy *Images*. Others helpe themselues by looking

king vp to heaue. It is also very good to quicken a man, when he is subiect to *distractions*, and dryneſſe, in *Mentall Prayer*, to caſt out ſome *Iaculatory Prayers*, and to ſpeake vocally to God; repreſenting our weakenes to him, and thus demanding remedy thereof, *Domine vim patior, reſponde pro me.* O Lord anſwere thou for me, for I ſuffer violence. That *Blinde man* of the *Goſpell*, although Chriſt our Lord ſeemed to diſſemble the care he had, and did paſſe wide of him; and although the people bad him hold his peace; yet he neuer gaue ouer to cry out, but rayſed his voyce, ſo much the more; and exclaimed ſaying, *Ieſu fili Dauid miſerere mei*, IESVS the Sonne of Dauid, haue mercy on me. *Confirma me Deus in hac hora.* Strengthen O Lord, and confirme this hart of mine, in this hower; to the end that it may be able to thinke of thee, and to be firme, and conſtant in my Prayer.

Note.

Iſa. 58. 14.

Mark. 10. 47.

Luc. 18. 38.

Iudi. 13. 9.

S. Angela de Fulgin. ca. 58. & 26.

A holy woman gaue this Counſel. If you cānot ſpeake to God with your hart, fayle not to ſpeake often to him, with your mouth; for that which is ſpo-

ſpoken ſo frequently, doth eaſily giue heat, and feruour to the hart. And this Saint confeſſeth of her ſelfe, that ſomtymes, through failing to vſe *vocall Prayer*, ſhe loſt that which was *mentall*, through her being ſo preſt and hindred, now and then, by ſlouth, and ſleepe. This alſo is our owne caſe. A man now and then, forbeares to ſpeake in his Prayer, out of very ſloth, and being halfe a ſleepe; whereas if he would ſpeake, he might awake, and reuiue himſelfe, for Prayer.

Gerſon ſayth, That it is a good remedy againſt *Diſtractions*, to haue the *Meditation* well prepared, and the *Points* diſtinguiſhed *for Prayer*. For therby, when one is diſtracted, and reflects vpon it, he hath already his *Point*, which is certayne and determined, to his hand, to which he may retire. And if that prooue not with him, he may inſtantly paſſe to another of thoſe *Points*, which he had prepared, & returnes the more eaſily, to ſpin on the thred of his Prayer. And we finde by experience, when we examine our ſelues, that many tymes the cauſe of *Gerſon.* Note.

our being *distracted*, and that we go wandring, vp and downe to diuers things, is because we haue not our *Points* well prouided, and knowne, vpon which we may make our Prayer, and so we want a place, to which we may retire our selues.

Moreouer, not only the aduise, which now I giue, but that also which followes, is very necessary, to the end that we may go well prepared for Prayer. And so our *B. Father* doth recommend it to vs, in very serious words. *Magnopere iuuabit, ante ingressum Exercitij, tractanda puncta comminisci, & numero certo præfinire.* It will greatly help, sayth he, if before we go to praier, we recapitulate the points whereupon we are to meditate, and do appoint a certaine number of them. And we read of him, that himselfe vsed this methode; and that, not onely in his beginnings, but afterward also, when he was an old man. And he prepared his *Exercise* ouer night, and went to rest, with that care vpon him. I relate this, to the end, that no man may thinke, that this diligence is onely to be

Ignatius l. Exercit. spiritualium notabile 3. hebdomadæ. 4.

Note.

be vſed by *Nouices*. Yea and although a man do already know the exercise well, as hauing meditated vpon it at other tymes; neuertheleſſe, it wilbe very well done for him, to prepare himſelfe againe. For thoſe words wherupon we *pray*, being vſually of the *holy ſcripture*, and therfore dictated by the *Holy Ghoſt*, the very reading them, with a quiet and repoſed mind, will rayſe a new attention, and deuotion, to meditate, and profit by them, ſo much the more.

Bonauent. in informat nouitiorum. p. 1. c. 4.

Againe, it wilbe of much helpe, if preſently when we awake, we giue no place to other thoughts, but thinke of the *Exerciſe* which we are to make; preparing our ſelues for Prayer, by ſome conſideration, accommodated to that which we are to *meditate*. *Caſſian*, *S. Bonauenture*, and *S. Iohn Climacus*, do hold this, for a very important aduiſe. And they ſay, that the order of our Prayer, and conſequently the diſpoſition of the whole day after, doth much depend heerupon. And *S. Iohn Climacus* doth obſerue, that wheras the diuell doth well ſee, that this particu-

Cùm euigilas, ſtatim omnes cogitationes tuas abijce de corde tuo, & offer Deo primitias cogitationum tuarum. *Climacus c. 28.*

ler is of much importance; he is therfore very diligent, and ſollicitous, in watching, when we chance to wake; to the end, that inſtantly he may take vp his lodging with vs; and ſo, gather the firſt fruits of the whole day. And he ſayth, that there is amongſt thoſe maligne ſpirits, one, whome they call the *Precurſor*, who hath the office to watch, and ſet vpon vs by night, at the tyme when we firſt awake, out of our ſleep, yea and a little before we are fully awake, when a man is ſcarce returned entirely vnto himſelfe; that ſo he may repreſent certaine deformed filthy things to our mind, or at leaſt, things impertinent; therby taking the poſſeſſion for the whole day; for he conceiues, that the hart wilbe his, who is firſt poſſeſſed therof.

For this reaſon, it will import vs much, that we be full of caution, in giuing no place to our enemy, but that inſtantly, when euen we haue ſcarce opened our eyes, the memory of our Lord, may be already planted in our harts, before any other thought be lodged

lodged there. Wherof our *B. Father*, doth alſo aduiſe vs: & he addeth moreouer, that the ſame guard, is, after a ſort, to be held by vs, ouer our ſelues, when we are to make Prayer, at any other houre, by recollecting our ſelues a little, to thinke, *Whither go I, and before whome do I purpoſe to appeare?* and by recapitulating briefly the myſtery whereupon you are to *meditate*, like one who tunes the inſtrument, before he playes. And our *B. Father* ſaid, that generally the making of good Prayer, and gathering ſtore of Fruite therby, did in great parte depend vpon the obſeruation of theſe, and the like aduiſes, which he calleth *Additions*. And our ſelues do very ordinarily find the truth of this, by experience; and that when we go well prepared, and take care to follow theſe directions, our Prayer proues very well; and if not, otherwiſe.

Ignatius li. exercitiorum ſpiritualium addit. 2. prioris hebdomadæ. & addit. 5. ſecundæ hebdomadæ. & in 1. modo orandi.

The holy Ghoſt ſayth, by the *Wiſeman*; *Ante orationem præpara animam tuam, & noli eſſe quaſi homo, qui tentat Deum.* Before Prayer prepare your ſelues for it, and be not like the man who tempteth

Eccl. 18. 23.

S. Tho. 2. 2. q. 97 a. 3. ad 2. Bonauent. in opuſculo cui titulus eſt, Regula nouitiorũ ca 2.

pteth God. S. Thomas & S. Bonauenture, note, vpon theſe words, that to go to Prayer, without preparation, *is to tempt God. For to tempt God*, ſay the Deuines *is to deſire any thing without imploying the vſuall, and neceſſary meanes, of obtayning it.* As if one ſhould ſay, *I will not eate becauſe God can, and will ſuſteyne me, without eating*. This ſhould be *a tempting of God*, and a demaunding of a miracle, without neceſſity. As Chriſt our Lord ſaid to the diuell, when he tooke him vp, to a pinnacle of the *Temple*, and perſwaded him *that he ſhould caſt himſelfe downe, and that God would command his Angells to take and carry him, in the palmes of their hands*; For our Lord anſwered thus. *Non tentabis Dominum Deum tuum. Thou ſhalt not tempt thy Lord, and thy God*, I may go downe by a ladder; this other is a tempting of God, and a demaund of a miracle without neceſſity. Since therfore the preparation of our ſelues to Prayer, is ſo principall, & ſo neceſſary a meanes, to the thing it ſelfe, that the *Wiſeman* ſayth, *That to reſolue to haue Prayer, without this preparation is a kind of tempting of God*, and a pretending,

Note.

Matt. 4. 7.

tendind to haue him shewe miracles with you, our Lord is well pleased that we haue good Prayer, and that we performe it with much attention, and reuerence; but yet he desireth that we should haue it, by the ordinary meanes, whereof we haue spoken.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of a matter of great consolation, for them who are molested, & distracted in Praier.

FOr the comfort of such as are molested with this temptation, *S. Basil* notes, that in *Prayer*, we onely then offend God by these *distractions*, and thoughts, when a man, with his will, and after reflection made vpon what he doth, is *distracted*, & carryeth himself with litle reuerence, and respect. He who putteth himselfe to *Prayer*, and therein doth purposely thinke of his *study*, or of his *office*, or of his *businesse*, doth well deserue that God should not help, but punish him. And here that comes well in, which *S. Chrysostome* sayth, *Tu vero audi orationem istam*, &

Basil. in constit. monastic. ca. 2.

Note.

Chrysost. ho. 17. in varia loca Matt. 10.

Dominum vis audire precem tuam? With what reaſon canſt thou expect, that God ſhould heare thee, when thou doſt not ſo much as heare thy ſelfe?

But on the other ſide, when a man doth morally what he can, and yet is *diſtracted*, through weaknes, & can not haue ſo much attẽtion, as he deſires, but doth as it were forſake his hart, & fly abroad, according to that of the Prophet, *Cor meum dereliquit me*; then our Lord is not offended with him; but rather is moued to compaſſion, and mercy, becauſe he well knoweth our infirmity, and weakenes. *Quemodo miſeretur pater filiorum, miſertus eſt Dominus timentibus ſe, quoniam ipſe cognouit figmentum noſtrum*. As a Father who hath a Sonne, ſick of a frenzy, ſuffereth with him, and is much afflicted, when he heares, that for euery word that he ſpeakes of ſenſe, he talkes idlely afterward; ſo our moſt mercifull, celeſtial father, doth pitty, and hath compaſſiõ of vs, whẽ he conſiders that the weakneſſe, and infirmity of our nature is ſo great, as that whẽ it impports vs moſt to be ſpeaking, in our wits, we flye

Pſa. 39. 13.

Pſa. 102. 13.

out

out into a thousand absurd thoughts.

And so although a man feele no deuotion & finde no iuyce in Prayer, but much dryneſſe, and combat of imaginations, and thoughts; and although he continue so, all the tyme of his Prayer; yet that very Prayer, leaues not to be very gratefull to our Lord God, and of great value, & merit, in his diuine presence. Nay it vseth many tymes, to be more gratefull, & meritorious, then if a man had passed through it, with much deuotion, and consolation; in regard that he hath endured, and suffered that difficulty, and trouble in that Prayer, for the loue of God. Neyther doth the same Prayer, leaue to obteyne grace & fauour, wherewith to serue our Lord better, and to increase more in vertue, and perfection, although he feele it not then. As it happeneth to a sicke man, who feeds vpon some meat of substance; & although he take no delight, nor feele no taſt therein, but payne and torment; yet he getteth strength, and growes therby towards a recouery. Note

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Note, By that which is said, it may be easily seene, how great an errour, and how grieuous a temptation it is, for a man to giue ouer his Prayer, because he findes it subiect to great variety of thoughts and temptations. Onely it is needfull, to be well aduertised, that vpon this occasion, & vnder colour of *I can no more*, tepidity and sloath doe not enter in; and that we be not facill and remisse, to be carryed away with all windes; and to suffer our thoughts to go wandering, and our imagination to be where it lists, as afterward I shall touch more at large; but that we performe, all that which is to be done on our parte; procuring with great care, & diligence to haue an eye, & to driue away those thoughts, as the holy *Abraham* did the birds, which descended ouer the *Sacrifice*. But doing (as is sayd) that which morally is in our power, there is no cause, why we should trouble our selues.

Tract. 8. ca. 50.

Genes. 15. 11.

Refert Blosius ca. 3. monit. spiritual. We reade of *S. Brigit*, that when she was tired in her Prayer with many temptations, our *Blessed Lady* appeared to her, and said: Thus the Di-

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uell being enuious at the good of me, procures, as much as he may, to giue them difficultyes and impediments, when they are in Prayer; but thou O Daughter, with whatsoeuer temptation, and how wicked soeuer, thou be molested in that Exercise, & though it seeme to thee that thou canst not possibly driue it away; yet procure thou neuertheless, to continue aswell as thou maist, in that good will of thine, and in those holy desires; and this shalbe a very good, and a very profitable Prayer, and it shalbe of great merit in the sight of God. We haue already spoken, els where, of a very good meanes for the restoring of that which we may seeme to haue lost, by our *distractions*.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the Temptation of Sleepe, *and from whence it comes, and the remedies therof.*

THE temptation of *Sleepe*, which is another kind of *distraction*, may some-

ſometimes proceed from a naturall cauſe, as by want of ſleepe, much wearynes, ill weather, exceſſe of age, exceſſe of eating, or of drinking, althogh it ſhould be but of water. Thoſe ancient holy Fathers of the *Deſert*, did relate, how God ſhewed to them in ſpirit, that there were certaine *Diuells*, who did ſet themſelues vpon the necks, and heads of *Monkes*, and made them ſleepe. And others who put certaine fingers into their mouthes, and made them yawne. At other tymes, this groweth from our ſloath, and negligence, when a man is in Prayer, in ſome ſuch compoſition of his perſon, as may giue occaſion to *Sleepe*. The chiefe remedy for this, is that which was ſaid before, concerning attention; and to remember that we are in the *preſence* of Almighty God. And, as a man who is in the preſence of ſome great Prince, will not preſume to ſleepe; ſo we, who conſider that we ſtand before the maieſty of God, and that he is beholding vs, ought to be much confounded in our ſelues, when we ſleepe in *Prayer*.

Cap. 22.

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It is alſo a good remedy to ſtand on foote, without leaning; and to waſh our eyes with cold water; and ſome vſe to carry a wet napkin about them, if they be much oppreſſed with this temptatiō. Some help themſelues, by looking vp to heauen; and by making Prayer, where there is much light; or els to pray in preſence of the B. *Sacrament*, in company of others; or to take a diſcipline before Prayer, wherby they may remaine, both awake, & deuout. Others, whilſt they are *Praying*, giue themſelues ſome kinde of little payne, whereby they keepe themſelues awake; & when they pray alone, they ſpread their armes, into the forme of a *Croſſe*. It helpeth alſo for this, to ſpeake, and ſay ſome *Vocall Prayers*, wherby a man may be ſtirred vp and much reuiued, as we ſaid before. It is good to ſerue our ſelues of theſe, and ſuch other remedyes, beſeeching our Lord, that he will cure this infirmity of ours. *Cap. 22.*

Ceſarius, in his dialogues, doth recount of a *Religious man* of the *Ciſtercian Order*, (who vſed to ſleepe many tymes *Cæſarius li. 4. dialog. c. 29.*

tymes in *Prayer*,) that there appeared to him Chriſt our Lord, being crucifyed, with his back turned towards him; and then he ſaid, *Why art thou ſo negligent and ſlothfull? Thou doeſt not deſerue to ſee my face.* Of another he recounteth there, that God did giue him a more ſharp reproofe, becauſe being in the *Quire* at *Prayer*, and ſleeping as he vſed, a *crucifix* came to him from the *Altar*, and gaue him ſuch a blow vpon the cheeke, that he dyed of it the third day after. All this, giues vs well to vnderſtand, how much this negligence and tepidity dipleaſeth God. The tepid, and negligent *Religious man* (as *Caſarius* ſayth) doth prouoke God, as if it were to vomit; according to that of the *Apocalyps*: *Becauſe thou art tepide, I will caſt thee out of my mouth*.

Caſarius lib. 4. c. 18.

Apoc. c. 3. 16.

Of *S. Romualdus* the *Abbot* (who was the founder of the order of *Camaldula*,) it is related by *Petrus Damianus* (ſpeaking of the *Prayer* which his *Religious* men did make) that it was, in the account of that Saint, ſo great a fault to ſleepe in *Prayer*, that he permitted not ſuch a one to ſay *Maſſe* that day; or

Romualdus Abbas.

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the little reuerence wherewith he had remained, in the presence of our Lord, whome he was to receiue.

Chap. XXV.

How much it importeth vs to take some extraordinary tyme, for the giuing of our selues to Prayer.

AS the men of this world, besides the ordinary, and daily refection of their bodyes, haue their extraordinary Feasts, and banquets, wherein they exceed their common course; so also is it very fit, that besides our dayly *Prayer*, we should also haue our spirituall feasts, and banquets; where our soules may not eate by so strict measure, as at other tymes; but may be filled by the abundance, and sweetnes of the grace of our Lord. Nature it selfe teacheth this. For we see, that the ground is not content, with the dew which falleth, night by night; but it requires sometymes, that it should rayne a whole weeke, or two, without ceasing; and all is little inough, to the

the end, that it may remaine ſo well imbrued, with water, as that the ſucceeding *Winde*, and *Sunne* may not dry it vp. So alſo it is fit for our ſoules, that, beſides the ordinary dew of euery day, they may haue ſome ſet tymes, wherein they may procure to fill themſelues ſo well with vertue, and with the very iuyce of deuotion, as that the *Snn*, or *Winde* of future buſineſſe, and temptations, or the other accidents of the world, may not ſerue to dry them vp. And ſo we read of many *Saints*, and *Prelates* of the *Church*, that leauing their imployments, and buſineſſe, they did often recolect theſelues for ſome tyme, in retired places; ſo to giue themſelues the more to *Prayer*, and diuine *Contemplation*. We read of the holy *Abbot Arſenius*, that he had for a cuſtome, to take ſome day in the weeke, for this purpoſe, which was the *Saturday*; at which tyme he continued from the euening therof, till the next day morning, in *Prayer*.

P. Franciſcus Arias p.2. del aprouechamiento eſpiritual. tract. 5. de la oration. cap. 7.

This is very important, not only for the aduancing, and improuing our ſelues more in vertue, and perfection, but

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but euen for the not returning backward. For so great is the weakenes & misery of man, and the inclination which we haue to ill; that although sometymes we begin our *spirituall Exercises* with feruour, yet we instantly go decaying, by little and little, and vnsaying that, which we professed before. Like water, which how high soeuer it boile, yet by retiring it from the fire, it doth presently, by little and little, returne to the naturall coldenes. So do we returne instantly to our repidity, and slackneſſe; which we seeme to haue more rooted in vs, and more connaturall to vs, then water hath to coldenes. *Sensus enim, & cogitatio humani cordis, in malum prona sunt, ab adolescentia sua*, sayth the *Holy Ghost*. *Quoniam nequam est natio eorum, & naturalis malitia ipsorum* For as we are *nothing*, so we are still returning to our *nothing*. Gen. 8. 21. Sap. 12. 10.

To this may be added, that since we are so full of imployments, some of vs in *studies*, others in particuler *ministeries*, others in *Offices* and *exterior businesse*; we haue so much the more need, of this particuler kind of *Recollection*. Note

For although our buſineſſe be good, and holy; yet as the knife is dulled by being dayly vſed, and, from tyme to tyme, it is neceſſary to giue it a new edge; ſo we grow dayly dull, and be forgetting our owne ſpirituall profit, whilſt we ſet forward, that of others. Euen the Philoſophers could tell vs, that, *Omne agens, agendo repatitur. Euery agent, doth euen by doing, ſuffer*, and part with ſomewhat of his owne; & euery man findes this by experience in himſelfe. It doth therfore importe vs very much, to recollect our ſelues at certayne tymes, and to vntye our mindes from all other imployments; to redreſſe this loſſe, and to repaire that, which is decaying dayly in vs, and to recouer new forces for the future. For we are yet more obliged, to helpe our ſelues then our neighbours, and *Charity well ordered beginnes at home.* 3. p. tract. 6. 4. l. 8.

This is alſo to be done, with great care, ſince it importeth ſo much, euen for the very *End*, of helping our neighbours. For a moſt certayne thing it is, that from our owne greater ſpirituall profit, doth alſo grow the greater ſpi- Note.

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rituall profit of our neighbours. And therfore, that tyme is not loſt to them, which any man takes for himſelfe; but rather they ſhall grow rich, by it. It is like the letting of land lye fallow for this yeare, to the end that it may fructify ſo much the more, the next. Father *Auila* ſaid, that it was like the moulding of a ſtone, to the end that it may be made able to *grind*. And ſo a mãs being to much in buſines, is ſo far from being any reaſon, why he ſhould not recolect himſelfe, as that for the ſame very cauſe, and ſo much the more, as a man is imploied, & much imbarked in *miniſteryes*, and *buſineſſes*, in ſo much the more neceſſity he is, of reſorting to this remedy. They who go ſayling far by ſea, haue need to take *Porte* many tymes, to refreſh themſelues, and take in neceſſary, & new prouiſions. And ſo they, who go imbarked in *buſineſſe*, & *miniſteries*, and *imployments* with their neighbours, and who are in ſo many dangers, and occaſions of ſinne; haue need many tymes, to make recourſe to to the *Port* of ſolitude and recolection, that ſo they may take in new & neceſ- *M. Auila.*

ſary prouiſions; and dreſſe vp, & prouide themſelues, of what is fit.

In the holy Goſpell, we haue an excellent example of this. The *Euangeliſt S. Marke*, recounteth how the Apoſtles went full of buſineſſe, in the imployments which they had, concerning their neighbours; in ſuch ſort as that they had ſcarce tyme to eate, ſo great was the nũber of people which was offered to them. They went to giue account, to Chriſt our Lord, of that which paſſed heerin; and he ſaid to them, *Come a part into the deſert, and repoſe awhile*? Recollect your ſelues a while, in the ſolitude of the *deſert*. If then the Apoſtles had need of repoſe, and recolection, and that our *B. Sauiour* himſelfe did counſell it to them, how much more need therof haue we?

They who treat of *Prayer*, ſay very well, that *Prayer is that to the ſoule, which repoſe and ſleepe is to the body*. And ſo, the *holy ſcripture* calleth it *ſleepe*: *Ego dormio, & cor meum vigilat. Adiuro vos filiæ Ieruſalem, ne ſuſcitetis, neque eurgilare faciatis dilectam, donec ipſa velit.* And declaring this more at large, they ſay, of the bo-

Cant. 5. 2.

Cant. 8. 4.

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dy, that when it reposeth by corporall sleepe, it resteth and recouereth new force and strength, and so the soule, reposing in the sleepe of *Prayer*, recouereth also fresh breath, and life, wherewith to labour, in the seruice of Almighty God. And more then this. As a man who feedeth vpon good meat, yet if he want repose, and necessary sleepe, will prooue but weake & sicke, yea and also be in danger, to loose his wits; so also he, who shall go greatly imployed in exterior businesses (how holy & good soeuer they may be) yet if he want the necessary repose, & rest of *Prayer*, he will prooue but weake & decaied in spirit, and will runne hazard to loose himselfe. And therfore doth the *Spouse* require, *That they awake not his beloued, till she will, herselfe.* When they wake a man out of sleepe, by any noise which they make, it is a thinge displeasing to him; but when he waketh of himselfe, because nature is satisfyed, and for that he hath reposed inough, (in regard that the fumes which mounted vp to the braine, are now disgested,) there is no offence Note.

therein. Iuſt ſo is it with the ſoule. Our Lord requireth, that no man, nor no thing trouble it, nor hinder the *Prayer* which ſhe is in; but when that reſt is taken which is neceſſary, ſhe may then awake herſelfe, and returne to the imployments of the works of *Charity*, and ſo they wilbe well performed.

Although it be of great importance for all men, and vpon all iuſt occaſions, to recollect themſelues in *ſpirituall Exerciſes*, and to giue themſelues more to *Prayer*, and ſo much the more as we ſhall do it, ſo much the better it wilbe; yet particulerly in ſome occaſions and coniunction of reaſons, this is neceſſary. As namely, when a man ſees, that he goes declyning in the *ſpirituall Exerciſes* of *Prayer*, of *Examen*, of *ſpirituall reading*, and that now, he gathereth not the fruite, and profit by it, which were fit: When he ſeeth that he growes negligent, and careleſſe in the obſeruance of his *Rules*, and that now, he makes no more accounte of ſmall matters: When he ſeemes to himſelfe, that he is not ſpirituall, and introuerted, but that he is very exterior,

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and much carried away, by the occa-ſions, and buſineſſes which he treates: When he alſo obſerueth, that he doth not ouercome, and mortify himſelfe out right, in ſome one thing; it is very good for him to recollect himſelfe, ſome dayes, in theſe *Exerciſes*, that ſo he may finiſh the reſolution, to conquer himſelfe. For it may be, that in one of theſe *Recollections*, he may obteyne more grace of our Lord, and more ſtrength wherewith to mortify, and ouercome himſelfe, then by the labour of many dayes.

Many tymes it happeneth, that a man goes lymping; he riſeth, and he falleth, and in ſome one of theſe *Exerciſes*, he remaineth vnbeguiled of the vanity of the world, and fully poſſeſſed of *Truth*, and reſolute to do all that is fit. He changeth his ſtyle, & he takes a new manner of life vpon him. For in fine, the being ſo long alone, treating with God, and with himſelfe, is a great diſpoſitiō, to make our Lord ſpeake to his hart, and to induce his Maieſty to do many fauours. *Sedebit ſolitarius, & tacebit, quia leuauit ſe ſuper ſe.* Tren. 3. 28

A man doth raise himselfe, aboue himselfe; & makes himselfe, quite another man. And so we haue seene very extraordinary changes, wrought in men by this meanes. *Et non est abbreuiata manus Domini.* Isa. 59. 1. We must neuer diſconfide in God, but be euer doing that, which is of our part. How do you know, what God will worke in your ſoule, by meanes of this diſpoſition? It may be, that our Lord hath reſolued to grant the ſpirituall profit, and perfection of your ſoule, in one of theſe *Exerciſes*,

Againe, after the hauing ended ſome very long iourney, or ſome buſines, or imployment of extraordinary diſtraction; this kind of *Recollection*, ſeemeth to be as important, as good & dainty treaty, is to a body, after a long diſeaſe, to the end that a man may recouer himſelfe, & repaire the ſtrength which he hath loſt. And for the ſame reaſon, it is alſo very good, for a man to prepare himſelfe before hand, by theſe *Exerciſes*, when he findes that he is growing into ſome ſuch kind of buſineſſe; to the end that he may do things with more vertue, and leſſe ſpirituall

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losse of his owne. The *Preseruatiue*, is a better kinde of *Phisicke*, then the *Remedy*, which comes after the *disease*. And therefore *our B. Father*, did recommend to all superiors, that before they began to enter vpon their office, they should make the *Exercises*, for some days. The same is also good, when one is to go into some long *Mission*. Wherof Christ our Lord gaue vs an example. For before he began to preach, he retired himselfe *fourty days, into Desert*. Also in a ryme of tribulations, and afflictions, whether they be generall of the whole *Church*, or of his owne *Order*, or of his owne person, the occasion is very good, for this. For to add more *Prayer*, and more *pennance*, and mortification, hath euer beene a meanes, much frequented in the *Church*, for appeasing the wrath of God, and obteyning mercy from him. Matt. 4. 1.

All these are very good occasions to make a man recolect himselfe in these *Exercises*. But indeed we haue no need, to stand seeking of occasions. Our owne necessity, and interest, must sollicite vs to desire, and procure this be-

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neſit very often. At leaſt, no yeare ought to paſſe, without our meeting with theſe *ſpirituall Vacations*. And when we do it, it muſt be very much in earneſt, and with the whole hart. For a thing of ſo great ſubſtance, as this, muſt in no caſe be performed with ceremony, nor for complement, or becauſe it is handſome.

Our Lord hath imparted this meanes to the *Society*, in a very particuler manner, not only for our owne profit, but for the help, and profit of our neighbout. And therfore, in the *Breues* of our *Inſtitute*, this is placed for one of the *Principall meanes*, which the *Society* hath, for the helping of their neighbours. And this alſo, is another very particuler reaſon, for which *our B. Father* will, that we haue much vſe of theſe *Exerciſes*. And he placeth it in his *Conſtitutions*, and in the *Rules* of *Prieſtes*; *Vt in hoc armorum ſpiritualium genere tractando, quod Dei gratiâ ad ipſius obſequium tantopere conferre cernitur, dexteritatem habere poſsit.* To the end that they may be very dextrous in the managing of this kind of Armes, which are ſo profi-

4. p. Conſt. c. 8. 5. reg. 7. Sacerdo.

table

table for the gayning of others. By this meanes, our Lord did gayne our *B. Father Ignatius*. By this meanes he gained his *Companions*. By this meanes, so many others haue beene gayned since, aswell within the *Society*, as without it; and both in the one, and in the other sort of men, we haue seene, that our Lord concurreth, with admirable effects. In fine we are to haue great cõfidence, that by this meanes, which hath beene imparted to vs, in so particuler manner by our Lord, he will helpe vs much, and do vs many fauours.

To that which is already said, I will add another thinge, which is very important, and which ought to assiste and encourage vs much herein, which is the singuler fauour & grace, which the *Sanctity* of *Paul the fifth*, hath granted in this particuler, to all *Religious men*, in that *Bull*, or *Constitution*, which he dispatched forth, vpon the three and twentith of *May*, in the yeare of our Lord, one thousãd six hundreth and six, which was the first of his *Pontificate*; declaring the *Indulgences*, which

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Religious men should enjoy therby. He there granted a *Plenary Indulgence*, and remission from all sinne, to all *Religious* persons, of what *Order* soeuer they were, who for the space of ten continued dayes, should make the *spirituall Exercises*; and that, as often as they should make them, they were to obteyne the same *Indulgence*. Wherby it may wel be seene, what estimation his *Holynes* made of this matter, and therby, how much our selues ought to esteeme it. *Ijs verò qui de suorum superiorum licentia, à negotijs, per decem dies, alieni in cella commorabuntur, aut ab aliorum conuersatione separati; in piorum librorum, & aliarum rerum spiritualium, animos ad deuotionem, & spiritum inducentium, lectionibus operam suam dederint; addendo sæpe considerationes, & meditationes mysteriorum fidei Catholicæ, diuinorum beneficiorum, quatuor nouissimorum, Passionis Domini nostri Iesu Christi, & aliorum exercitiorum, orationum iaculatoriarum, aut vocalium, saltem per duas horas in diem & noctem, orationibus mentalibus sese exercendo, faciendo eodem tempore confessionem generalem, aut annualem, vel ordinariam, sanctissimum Euchari-*

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ſtra Sacramentum ſumpſerint, aut celebrauerint. Quoties pro qualibet prædictorum Exercitiorum, plenariam ſimiliter omnium peccatorum ſuorum indulgentiam & remiſſionem, miſericorditer in Domino concedimus. And alſo to all them, who with the leaue of their Superiours, (hauing laid buſineſſe aſide, and being recollected in their Cell, or ſeparated otherwiſe, from treating and conuerſing with the reſt) ſhall exerciſe themſelues for the ſpace of ten days, in the reading of pious bookes, and vſing other ſpirituall exerciſes, which raiſe the hart to ſpirit & deuotiō; accompanying theſe things many tymes with the conſiderations and meditations of the myſteryes of the Catholike Fayth, and of the benefits of God, and of the *Quatuor nouiſsima*, and of the paſſion of Ieſus-Chriſt our Lord, and other Exerciſes of iaculatory and vocall Prayers; and making alſo mentall Prayer, at the leaſt for two houres of the day; and making, alſo within the ſaid tyme, eyther their Generall, or Annuall, or Ordinary Confeſſion, and receiuing the moſt B. Sacrament of the Euchariſt,

riſt, or ſaying Maſſe; whenſoeuer they ſhall do the aforeſaide Exerciſes, for euery tyme, that they ſo ſhall do them, we do mercifully in our Lord, grant a Plenary Indulgence, and remiſſion of all their ſinnes.

Chap. XXVI.

Of the Fruite *which we are to gather when we recollect our ſelues, to make the ſpirituall* Exerciſes.

WE are principally to caſt our eyes, vpon three things, which we are to procure by theſe *Exerciſes*. The firſt is, that we muſt repaire, and renew our ſelues, in the ordinary dayly actions which we performe, and that we perfect our ſelues in them. *For all our ſpirituall profit and perfection, doth conſiſt in doing our ordinary actions well*, as we ſaid els where. Let no man thinke, that the performing of theſe *Exerciſes*, is nothing els, but to cõtinue recolected there, for a weeke or two, enioying much tyme of *Prayer*. It is not ſo; but to the end, that he may depart

Tract. 2. cap. 18. 2.

Note.

depart frō thence, with ability to make better *Prayer*, and to keep thoſe *Additions*, and *documents*, which are giuen to that purpoſe, and to make his *Examens* well, and to ſay, & heare *Maſſe*, and the *diuine office*, and to read *ſpirituall bookes* with profit. For this, it is, that a man diſimployes himſelfe from other buſineſſe, during this tyme, to actuate and exerciſe his mind in doing thoſe things wel; that ſo he may go forth, al renued, & accuſtomed to performe them ſtill, after the ſame manner.

And ſo our *B. Father* ſayth, that during all the tyme, that the *Exerciſes* continue (which when they are made completely, are to laſt for the ſpace of a moneth, there muſt be a particuler *Examen*, carried vpon the obſeruation of the *Additions*; and whether the ſame *ſpirituall Exerciſes* be made with diligence, and exactnes, or no; ſetting downe the errours which he may haue committed, concerning eyther the one, or the other; to the end that a man may be habituated, and accuſtomed to do theſe things from that tyme forward, truly well. This he repeateth many

Ignatius l. Exercit. ſpiritual. in addit. 3. hebdomad. notabile 4. & in hebdoma. 5. & hebd. 3. notabile 4. poſt 2. contempl.

many tymes, as one who well knew, the much good that growes therby. And not only in the *ſpirituall Exerciſes* themſelues, which is the principall, & which muſt giue force, and ſpirit to all the reſt; but for all his other exteriour miniſteryes, and imployments, a man is to goe, a very good proficient, out of the *Exerciſes*, fetching breath from thẽce, wherewith to do his duty, and to keepe his *Rules*, better then before. So that the Fruite of his *Exerciſes*, is not to be gathered, for that tyme alone, but principally for the future. And ſo as that when any man comes forth of the *Exerciſes*, another man may ſee, the profit which he hath made, by the actions which he performeth.

The ſecond thing which we are to procure, to draw out of theſe *Exerciſes*, is, to ouercome and mortifie our ſelues, in any vntowardnes, or imperfection, to which he may haue beene ſubiect. Let euery man caſt his eyes vpon thoſe things, in which he vſeth to fayle moſt frequently; or to be a cauſe to make others fayle, or be ſcandalized by the diſedification which he gineth them-

them. And let him procure to go out of the *Exercises* very well, and for that they were principally ordeyned, & it is theyr *End*. And so, the *Title* which our *B. Father* giues, to the *Exercises*, is this in vulgar: *Spirituall Meditations, to make a man able to ouercome himselfe; & to direct his desires, and deeds, to the greater seruice of our Lord God.* In such sort, that a man must procure, to go out of the *Exercises*, conuerted, and changed into another man. *Et mutaberis in alium virum*, as *Samuel* said to *Saul*. *Et in virum perfectum: Into a perfect man* (as S. Paul sayth,) that a man may see, by the effects, and by the actions, that such a one, hath made the *Exercises*. That if before, he loued to be talking, and to loose his tyme; men may see that now, he is a louer of silence, & recolection. If before, he loued to be kindly, and commodiously vsed; it may be seene, that now, he is a louer of mortification, and pennance. If before, he were a man, who vsed to mortify others by his tongue; that from that tyme forward, he speakes no more, any such thinges, as those. If before, he were negligent,

1. Reg. 10. 6.

Ephes. 4. 13.

ligent, and careleſſe, in the obſeruation of his *Rules*, and made noe great reckoning of ſmall errours; that from thence forth, he be very obedient, and very punctuall, and that he maketh much account, euen of the leaſt omiſſions; and that, by the grace of our Lord, he committeth no fault at all, of ſet purpoſe. For if a man be ſtill to continue with the ſame vntowardneſſe, and errours, and that he will needs come out of the *Exerciſes*, as he went in, for what purpoſe do they ſerue?

Ambr. l. 2. de pœnit. c. 10. *S. Ambroſe* tels a certaine thing, of a Younge man of his tyme, which ſince he relates, we may do ſo too. He had beene a loſte man, and had taken the broade way, which had offered it ſelfe to him. The tyme came, that he changed his purpoſe, and retorning afterward to his Citty, he encountred with his old *Camerado's*, but he went wide of them. And they maruelling thereat, and thinking, that he had not knowne them, came to him, and ſaid: *Gal. 2. 20.* *We are they* &c. and he anſwered, *But I am not he.* For he was changed, and growne

growne another man. After this manner, are we to be conuerted, and changed, that so we may say with the Apostle, *Viuo ego, iam non ego, viuit vero in me Christus.* I liue, yet now not I; no longer now liueth he, who liued anciently in the Law, he who persecuted the Church, but Christ is he, who liueth in me. And this sayth *S. Ambrose*; which is also the same which was said by *Christ* our Lord, *Si quis vult venire post me abneget seipsum*; That man (sayth he) denies himselfe, who is changed into another man, and procures already not to be that, which he was wont to be. It is related of our *Father Francis de Borgia*, in his life, that after he had conducted the body of the *Empresse* to *Granada* (where our Lord gaue him great light, and vnbeguiled him concerning the vanity of the world, by that spectacle of death, which was present to him) and returning to the Court, he said that it seemed to him, as if he had found it changed, from what it was. But the truth is, that it was himselfe who was all varied, and changed, by the knowledge, and lighte; which

Hier. super hæc verba.

Ambrose

Math. 16. 24. Lucæ 9. 23.

Lib. 1. c. 8. vitæ P. de Borgia.

Note.

God had giuen him. And in this manner, are we to come out of the *Exerciſes*, with ſuch new light, and ſo vnbeguiled, as our Lord is wont to make men, in the *Exerciſes*.

Note.

The third thing, vpon which we are to looke, that we may drawe it out of the *Exerciſes*, which indeed doth follow, vpon that which is already ſayd, is the obteyning of ſome vertue, or ſomething belonging to perfection; and particulerly of that, wherof we haue greateſt need; for they be ordeyned for this, *To roote out Vice, and to plant Vertue.* Two things ſayth the *Saint*, do help a man much towards God. The one, to diuert a mans ſelfe, with great courage, from that to which his nature viciouſly inclynes him, which is that we ſpake of before. The other, to labour with feruour, for that vertue, which is moſt wanting to vs. And ſo the *Directory* of the *Exerciſes*, (ſpeaking of the way, which we are to hold, when we recollect our ſelues to them) doth aduertiſe, that all the tyme is not to be imployed, vpon the *Meditations*, of the *firſt weeke*. For them (ſayth he)

Thomas de Kempis

Directorium Exercitio. 1. 3.

two

two or three days will ſuffice, to the end that there may be alſo tyme, to go to other *Meditations*, from whence we may drawe more perfection. And amongſt others thinges which he placeth there for this purpoſe, one is, that we muſt take now and then, ſome of thoſe principall *Rules*, in which we may conceiue, that all the perfection which we can deſire, doth conſiſt. As that (for example,) which ſayth, *That as worldly men loue and ſeeke honours, fame, & eſtimation of renowne in the world; ſo we muſt loue, and intenſely deſire, the very contrary.* Take to hart, in ſome one *Exerciſe*, to obteyne this perfection, and to arriue to this *degree of humility*, that you may be as glad of affronts, diſgraces, iniuryes, and falſe teſtimonies, as worldly men are glad of honor, & eſtimation; and therby you ſhall growe to be Lord ouer many impertinences, and debates, which vſe to preſent thēſelues to you, vpon the pointe of being valued, & eſteemed; more then one, for his *learning*; and then another, for his *office*; and then another, in the *Miniſteryes of buſineſſe* which he treats; which

Reg. 11. ſumarij conſtit.

Reg. 17. Summar. things are wont to inquiet vs, and to hinder our ſpirituall profit, very much.

Take to hart, at ſome other time, that rule which ſayth: *Let all men, in all things, procure to ſerue, and pleaſe the diuine goodneſſe, for that goodnes ſake it ſelfe, & for the loue of it, and for thoſe ſinguler benefits, wherewith he preuenteth vs, more then either for the feare of punishment, or the hope of reward.* Procure you to attiue to this *Purity of intention*, that you ſeeke not your owne intereſt at all, neither in much, nor little, neither in the temporall nor eternall; but in all things, deſire truly, the will, and glory of God, and let this be your contentment, hauing forgotten your ſelues, and all your owne intereſt, and commodity. Take to hart, another tyme, to obteyne, *A moſt perfect Conformity, to the will of God*, taking all things which ſhall preſent themſelues, eyther great or ſmall, in whatſoeuer manner, or by whatſoeuer way they come; as being deliuered, by the hand of God himſelfe. Vpon theſe poynts of perfection, and other things like theſe, we are to caſt our eyes, whe

we

we enter into the *Exercises*, and not to giue ouer, till we obteyne them.

Chap. XXVII.

Of some directions, which will helpe vs yet more, to profit by these Exercises.

TO the end that we may profit more by these *spirituall Exercises*, & fetch that Fruite from them, which hath beene saide, it is to be aduertised, first (according to what we sayd before) that as when one is going to *Prayer*, he is not only to haue those *Points* prouided, vpon which he will *Meditate*; but also the *Fruite*, which he is to drawe from thence; so also he, who is to make the *Exercises*, must, in particuler, haue that thing ready prouided in his minde, which he meanes to obteyne by their meanes: & it may be done after this manner. Cap. 14.

Before he retires himselfe to them, he is to consider, and treate thus with himselfe, at much leasure, & attention, *Which is the greatest spirituall necessity, that I haue? What is that, to which my vicious in-* Note.

clination, or my passions, or my ill custome, doth inclyne me most? What is that, which maketh the stiffest war against my soule? What is there in me, whereby my brethren may be offended, and edified? And this is that which I am to carry before mine eyes, to the end that I may obteyne it by my *Exercises*, and may resolue effectually to amend my selfe. This is a very good preparation, for entring into the *Exercises*.

Note. And it is also to be aduertised, that when a man recollects himselfe, to make the *Exercises*, he must not propound to himselfe, the obteyning of *very high Prayer*, nor to thinke, by that retiring, and shutting vp himselfe, that he must presently haue much quietnes, & attention, and familiarity with almighty God; for it may well happen, that he shall be subiect to more *distractions*, vnquietnes, and temptations, then when he was in the dispatch of his *businesse*, and performing his office abroad. But he is to fix his minde, vpon fetching that which I haue said, out of his *Exercises*, and to resolue himselfe vpon that, in great earnest. And

if

if he obteyne this, he shall haue made the *Exercises* very well, though he had not the deuotion, which he desired. Whereas if he obteyne not this, although, from the very first hower he haue beene euer dissoluing himselfe in teares, and deuotion, he shall not haue made the Exercises well; for in fine, that was not the end therof.

That other aduertisement will also help vs much, which our *B. Father* gaue, and which he will euer haue vs obserue in *Prayer*. That afterward, when a man hath ended his hower of *Prayer*, he shall, for a quarter of an hower, or therabouts, eyther sitting or standing, make his *Examen*, of the same *Prayer*. And he shall take account of himselfe, how it hath prooued with him. If ill, he shall consider the cause from whence that may haue proceeded. He shall consider, if he prepared his *Exercise* well; if he gaue place to any impertinēt thoughts; if he suffred himselfe to be ouercome with sleepe; if he deteyned himselfe too much in the speculation of his *Vnderstanding*. If his hart were remisse, and tainte; and if he

Ignatius l. Exercit. spirituali in addit. 2. hebdomad. addit. 3.

Note.

he did not procure, to exercise the affects of his *Will*. If he had not an intention, as pure as he ought to haue had it; but that he sought his owne comfort, more then the accomplishment of the diuine will. If he finde himselfe to haue failed, in any of these things, he shall repent himselfe therof, and purpose amendment, for the tyme to come. And if it haue prooued well, with him, he shall giue thanks to our Lord God, procuring to carry himselfe after the same manner, at his other tymes of *Prayer*.

This document, is of much importance: First, because by this *Examen*, & *Reflection*, which is made, how the *Prayer* hath proued, experience is taken to auoide the faults, and to prosecute that, which was well done; wherby a man obteynes a certaine spirituall discretion and magistery, which groweth from experimentall knowledge. For this reason, did our *B. Father*, esteeme greatly of this *Examen*, and *Reflection*, for the making of such, as might be *Maisters*, not only in this, but also in other imployments, and ministeries of

ours.

ours. And ſo, in the fourth part of his *Conſtitutions*, he ſayth: That it will greatly helpe a *Ghoſtely Father*, towards the doing of his duty well, to make *reflection*, and to conſider if he haue made any fault, in the hearing of *Confeſsions*. Eſpecially (ſayth he) let him do it, in his beginnings, ſo to helpe himſelfe another tyme; and to drawe amendemēt out of his errours. For this reaſon therfore, the *Examen of Prayer*, is to be made. And this is the firſt thing which we are do therein. And *Prayer* is of ſo great eſtimation, and it importeth vs ſo much that we be accuſtomed to make it well, and to go ſhredding off the faults which we make therein; that our *B. Father*, did not content himſelfe with the *Examen* of *Conſcience*, which we vſe to make euery day at *noone*, & at *night*; but inſtantly alſo, aſſoone as we haue ended our *Prayer*, his expreſſe pleaſure is, that we ſhold make a particuler *Examen* therof. 4. p. Conſt. c. 8. litera D.

The ſecond thing, (and that a very principall one) is, that a man is to conſider the *Fruite*, which he hath gathered by that *Prayer*, and to returne Note,

to

to actuate againe vpon it, (as when one repeats his leſſon) and drawes out the *Concluſions*, and *Truthes*, which haue occurred; and makes as it were, an *epilogue* of them. And this *Examen*, is to be held, for a thing of ſo great importance, that if a man want tyme to make it after the *Prayer* is ended, he is to make it in the very *Prayer*, it ſelfe, in the ending therof.

We may add in this place, another poinnte which will alſo be of good vſe. That a man ſet downe, that which he hath wrought out of his *Prayer*; writing the *deſires* which he hath had, and the *Purpoſes* which he hath made; but this, muſt not be done at large, but in a briefe manner. And ſo alſo, let him ſet downe, ſuch *Truthes*, and *Illuſtrations*, or *Pabequillings* of the vanity of this world, as our Lord is wont to giue in *Prayer*. Sometymes cõcerning ſome *Vertue*, and at other tymes, concerning the *Myſteryes* themſelues, which are in queſtion. And ſo we read, that our *Firſt Fathers* vſed to do, our B. *Father Ignatius*, and Father *Peter Faber*; and we haue in our hands, ſome of thoſe things

Lib. 9. c. 13 vitæ P. Fabri.

things which they wrote hereupon. And *Father Francis Xauerius*, did also aduise the same, as we read in his *liſe*. And in the *Directory* of the *Exercises*, we haue also the same aduiſe.

Xauer. c. 2. & 4. Director. Exercitorū ſpiritual.

And our *Father Generall*, *Claudius Aquauiua*, in the booke of *Induſtryes*, which he wrote, doth recommend it vnto vs, when he ſpeakes of *Prayer*. For beſides, that herby, we perfect our *Purpoſes*, and *deſires* more, and that they growe to be more rooted in our harts; we finde by experience, that a man alſo profits much in other reſpects, by reading theſe things afterward. Becauſe they, hauing been a mans owne, and for that he hath felt them as ſuch; they moue him afterward, more then other things; and he eaſily actuates vpon them, agayne. And when he findeth afterward, that he arriueth not to the *ſpirit*, of that he was before, he is confounded, to ſee, that he is no more the man he was; and that, inſteed of aduancing, he is retired. Wherby he will eyther animate himſelfe to put on a pace; or els he will ſupply, by his confuſion, that which he ſhall want of perfe-

Claudius Aquauiua in induſtriis ad curandos animæ morbos c. 3.

perfection. So that this, vseth euer to be of much profit; though especially it be so, in tyme of the *Exercises*.

2. p. tract. 7. Lastly I say, that if at all tymes, it be good to giue account of a mans conscience, and of his *Prayer*, to some spirituall man; in this, it wilbe much more fit. And some, because they will not humble themselues so far, do not gather, out of the *Exercises*, so much *Fruite*, as they might.

Chap. XXVIII.

Of the Reading *of spirituall Bookes; and how important it is; and of some meanes which may help vs to do it profitably, and well.*

READING, is the Sister, and a great Helper to *Prayer*. And so the 1. Tim. 4. 13. *Apostle S. Paul*, doth counsell his disciple *Timothy*, *That he should attend to Reading*. *Attende lectioni*. This *spirituall Reading* is of so great importance, for a man that preteds to serue God, that *S. Athanasius*, in an exhortation, which he Athanasius. maketh *to Religious men*, saith thus: *Sine legendi*

legendi ſtudio, neminem ad Deum intentum videas. Thou ſhalt ſee no body, who indeed pretēds to profit in ſpirit, who is not alſo giuen to Reading of ſpirituall books; & he who leaues it, will quickly ſhew it, by the ſtate which you ſhall finde him in. *S. Hierome*, in an epiſtle to *Euſtochium*, recommending much to her, that ſhe giue herſelfe greatly to this *ſacred Lection*, ſayth thus: *Tenenti codicem ſomnus obrepat, & cadentem faciem pagina ſancta ſuſcipiat.* Read, till ſleepe take thee; and when, being ouercome by ſleepe, thy head is dropping downeward, let thoſe holy leaues receiue it. All the Saints do greatly recommend this *ſpirituall lection.* And experience telleth vs, how profitable it is; ſince we ſee the ſtoryes full of great conuerſions, which our Lord hath wrought, by this meanes. Hierome.

This *Reading*, is a meanes ſo principall, & ſo important, for our ſpirituall good; that the founders of *Religious orders*, being rooted in the doctrine of the *Apoſtle*, and in the auctority, and experience of the *Saints*, haue ordeyned, *That their Religious, ſhould euery day, re-*

ſorte

Vmbertus ſett to ſpirituall *Reading*. *Vmbertus* ſayth *in Prolog.* of holy *S. Bennet*, that he ordeyned a ſet tyme, for this *Reading*, euery day. And he ordeyned with all, that during that tyme, two of the moſt ancient *Monkes*, ſhould go about the *Monaſtery*, to viſite, and to ſee, if any did eyther forbeare it themſelues, or hinder others. Wherby it may appeare, how much accounte they made therof. And, by the way, we may perceiue, that theſe *Viſites*, which now are daily vſed in *Religion*, at the tyme of *ſpirituall Exerciſes*, are grounded in the doctrine, & experience of the *ancient Saints*. For the firſt, and ſecond tyme, that any faiſed herein, the *Saint* ordeyned, that he ſhould be reprooued, after a milde faſhion; but if he mended not with that, that then they ſhould correct, & giue him ſuch a pennance, as wherby the reſt might be kept in feare. In the *Society* we haue *a Rule*, which concernes this *ſpirituall Reading*, and it ſpeaketh thus: *Let all men, twice in the day, giue that tyme, which is ordeyned, to the Examen of Conſcience, and Prayer, and Lection, with all diligence, in our Lord.* And the *Superior*

Regula 1 communis.

perior or Prefect of ſpirituall matters, hath care that euery one, may depute ſome tyme, to this purpoſe, euery day. And generally, this is a helpe for all thoſe who pretend to obtayne vertue, and perfection; And therfore to the end that they may exerciſe it with the more *Fruite*, we will here ſay ſomething, which may conduce therunto.

S. Ambroſe, exhorting vs, to giue all the tyme we can to *Prayer*, & *ſpirituall Reading*, ſayth: *Cur non illa tempora quibus ab Eccleſia vacas, lectioni impendas? Cur non Chriſtum alloquaris? Chriſtum audias? Illum alloquimur cùm oramus: illum audimus cùm diuina legimus oracula.* Wherefore doeſt thou not imploy that tyme, which is free from the Quire, vpon Reading, and Prayer? Why doeſt thou not goe to viſit Chriſt our Lord? and both ſpeake to him, and heare him? For when we pray, he ſayth, that we ſpeake to God; and and when we reade, he ſpeakes to vs. Let this be therfore, the firſt meanes to profit by *ſpirituall Reading*, that we make account, *that God is ſpeaking to vs*, & that he ſpeakes euery thing, which

Ambro. lib. 1. officior. cap. 20.

heere we *Reade.*

Auguſt. Epiſt. 149. ad Demetriad. virginem.

S. Auguſtine doth alſo ſpeake of this helpe. *Ita Scripturas ſanctas lege, vt ſemper memineris, Dei illa verba eſſe, qui legem ſuam non ſolùm ſciri, ſed etiam impleri iubet.* Whē thou readeſt, thou art to make account, that God is ſaying to thee, that which thou readeſt, not only that thou mayſt know it, but alſo that thou mayſt performe, and put it in practiſe.

Note.

He addeth another conſideration, which is both very good, and very pious. *Auguſt. ſer. 36. ad Fra. in eremo.* *Diuinæ ſcripturæ, quaſi literæ de Patria noſtra ſunt.* Doſt thou know, (ſayth he) how we are to read the Holy Scriptures? *As a man would read ſome letters, which are come to him out of his Country, himſelfe being then abroade; to ſee what newes there is of Heauen, what they tell vs of that Country of ours; where our Fathers, and Brothers, and Friendes, and Acquaintance are; and where we would ſo faine be, and we long, and ſigh to be going thither.*

Greg. li. 2. mor. c. 1.

S. Gregory, treating of this pointe, ſayth that the *holy Scripture* (& the ſame we may vnderſtand of any other *ſpirituall Reading*) *is like the placing of a glaſſe before the eyes of our ſoule, to the end that we may*

may see, our inwarde man. For there we come to know, and playnely see, the good and bad, that is in vs; and how much we profit; and how far we are from perfection. And sometymes, there are related to vs, the admirable deedes of *Saints*, which may animate vs to their imitation; and to the end that by seeing their great victoryes, & triumphs, we may not be dismaid, at our owne temptations, and troubles. At other tymes, there is relation made, not only of their vertues, but of their faults, to the end that by the one, we may knowe what we are to imitate; and by the other, what we are to feare. And so sometymes, there is set before vs, a *Iob*, who rose vp like foame, by meanes of temptations; at other tymes, a *David*, who was drawne downe therby; to the end that the former may animate vs, and giue vs confidence in tribulation; and the later, may make vs humble, and timerous, in the middest of prosperityes and consolations; & may make vs neuer trust, or be secure of our selues, but euer to go on with great caution, and care. And so sayth *S. Augu-*

Note.

Auguſt. epiſt. 143. ad Virginem Demetr.

ſtine. Optimè vteris lectione diuina, ſi tibi eam adhibeas, ſpeculi vice, vt ibi velut ad imaginem ſuam, anima reſpiciat; & vel ſæda quæq; corrigat, vel pulchra plus ornet. Then you make good vſe of the Reading, *of holy Scriptures* when you take it as a glaſſe, wherein to view your ſoule, procuring to correct, and remoue, that deformity and ill, which is reprehended there, and to adorne, and beautify it yet more, by the examples and vertues, which there you finde.

But deſcending more in particuler, to the way which we are to hold herein, it is to be noted; That to the end that our *Reading*, may be profitable, it muſt not be haſty, and curſory, as when a man would *reade a Story*; but it muſt be attentiue, and quiet. For as the ſuddaine and tempeſtuous rayne, doth not bath, and fertilize the earth; but that is done, by the ſweet, & quiet ſhower; ſo, to the end that our *reading* may enter, and be ſteeped more throughly, in the hart, it wilbe fit that it be done with pawſe, and ponderation.

Note.

And it is good, when we meete with ſome deuout paſſage, to deteyne

our

our ſelues more therein, and to make a kinde of *Station* vpon it; reflecting vpon that which we ſhall haue *read*; and procuring to mooue, and effect our *will* therby, as we vſe to do in *Meditation*. Although in *Meditation*, this muſt be done more at large, deteyning our ſelues more vpon thoſe thoughts, and ruminating, and digeſting them more. But yet, the ſame muſt be done, to ſome proportion, in this *ſpirituall Reading*; & ſo the *Saints* do aduiſe. And they ſay, that *ſpirituall Reading*, muſt be like the drinking of a Hen, which drinkes by little, and little, and ſo lifteth vp the head agayne.

Heerby a man may ſee, what a Siſter, & Companiõ, *Reading* is to *Prayer*. It is ſo, in ſo great degree, that when we apply any man firſt to *Mentall Prayer*, and that, we will proceed with him gently (by degrees) to put him into ſome diſpoſition that way; we aduiſe him *to read ſome ſpirituall booke*, & whilſt he is *Reading*, to make ſome ſtations & pawſes, in ſuch ſort as we haue ſaid; for by this meanes, our Lord is wont many times, to raiſe men, to the *Exerciſe*

Bern. epiſt. ſeu Tract. ad Fratr. de monte Dei Hauriendus eſt ſæpe lectionis ſeriæ affectus, & formanda oratio quæ lectionem interrumpat, & nõ tam impediat interrumpendo, quàm puriorem continuo animum ad intelligentiam lectionis reſtituat. *Et in ſpec. monachor.* Nec ſemper ad o-

ratorium est eundum, sed in ipsa lectione poterit contemplari & orare. *Idem S. Ephrem. serm 7. Chrysost. ho 10 super Genesim. Auz. ser. 38. ad Fra. in eremo.*

of *Mentall Prayer*. And so also, whē men are not able to enter wel vpon *Prayer*, and if they thinke they shall not be able to go through with it, at that tyme, we vse to counsell them, to take some good booke in hand, & to ioyne *Prayer*, & *Reading* both together. First, *Reading* a little, & then *Meditating*, and *Praying* vpon it; and then to *Read* another little. For by this meanes, the vnderstanding being tyed vp by the words, which are read, a man is much more secured from scattering himselfe vpon diuers imaginatiōs, & thoughts, then when he was free, and loose. So that in *Reading*, we may also very wel, haue *Prayer*.

Note. For this it is, that the *Saints* do so earnestly recommend *spirituall Reading*, & they deliuer in effect, the same praises, & profits as belonging to it, which they ascribe to *Priaer*. For they say, *That it is the spirituall foode of the soule; That it makes vs strong & stiffe against temptations;* **Note.** *That it breeds in vs, good thoughts, & desires of heauen. That it giues lighte to our vnderstanding; That it kindles & inflames our wil; That it driues away the sorrowes of this world,*

world, and causeth a ioyfullnes in vs, which is true and spirituall, & according to God. And such other things as these, they say herof.

Note.

The blessed *S. Bernard* giues vs another aduertisemẽt, to make vs profit by *Spiritual Reading*. He saith, *Si ad legendum accedat, non tam quærat scientiã, quàm saporem.* He who comes to Reading, is not so much to seeke knowledge, as a certayne sauour, & gust of the will. For the single knowledge of the *Vnderstanding*, is but a dry kinde of thing, if it be not applyed to the *will*, in such sort, as that the affect may, by degrees, be takẽ, and deuotion conserued; for this is that which maketh *Reading* to be full of iuyce, & profit, and it is the *End* therof. This is a very principall aduise. For there is a great deale of difference, between *Reading* to *know*; & *Reading* with a designe to profit, by it; Betwene *Reading* for others, and *Reading* for a mans self. For the former of these two, is *Study*, & the later is *Spirituall Reading*. And therfore, if whẽ you dispose your selfe to *Read*, you only direct your mind, to the *Knowing* of things, or to draw out

Bernard. in speculo Monachorum.

cõceits, which you may *preach*, & powre out to others afterward; this ſhould be *ſtudying* for them, and not *Spirituall Reading* for your own profit. For that other, there are other tymes appoynted.

Eccl. 3. 1. *Omnia tempus habent: Euery thinge hath his tyme.* And the tyme of *ſpirituall Reading*, is not for *Study*, but for that, which we haue ſaid.

S. Ephrem. ſerm. 7. Bern. epiſt. ad fratres de monte Dei. Difficilis etiam lectio ſcripturæ fatigat, non reficit teneriorem animam; frangit intentionem, hebetat ſenſum vel ingeniũ.

The Saints do alſo recommẽd to vs, for the ſame reaſon, That we muſt not read too much at once, nor paſſe many howers together therein, leaſt a mans ſpirit be tired with *long Reading*, inſteed of being recreated. Which is another aduiſe very good, & very neceſſary, for ſome, who ſeeme to place their felicity in *Reading* much, & paſſing ouer many bookes. But, as much eating is not the thinge which ſuſteynes the body, but good digeſtion of that which is eaten; ſo nether is the ſoule ſuſteined by *Reading* much, but by ruminating, and digeſting well, that which is *Read*.

Note. For the ſame cauſe, they alſo ſay, that *ſpirituall Reading* muſt not be, of things very hard; but they muſt be playne, & rather of deuotion, then difficult. For things

things of difficulty, are wont to weary the mind, and to dry vp deuotion. *Hugo* of *S. Victor*, bringeth an example of a ſeruant of God, who was admonished by *Reuelation*, that he ſhould leaue the *Reading* of ſuch things; and ſhould reſort to the *Liues*, and *Martyrdoms* of *Saints*, and ſuch other plaine & deuout writings, wherby he profitted much. S. Bernard ſayth further. *Sed & de quotidiana lectione, aliquid quotidie in ventrem memoriæ dimittendum eſt, quod fidelius digeratur: & rurſus reuocatum, crebrius ruminetur; quod propoſito conueniat, quod intentioni proficiat, quod detineat animum ita vt aliena cogitare non libeat.* We are alwayes to commit ſomewhat to our memory of what we *read*; to the end that we may ruminate, & digeſte it the better afterward; and eſpecially that, which we ſee may help vs moſt, and wherof we haue moſt need; to the end that betweene the howers of the day, we may goe thinking vpon good and holy things, and not vpon ſuch, as are impertinent and vayne.

Hugo de S. Victore li. 5. erudit. Didaſcalica. c. 7.

Bernard. Epiſt. ſeu tract. ad fratrem de monte Dei.

Note.

Iuſt ſo, as we muſt not eate our corporall food, to the end that we may ſpend

ſpend that tyme in eating; but that, in vertue of the ſame foode, which then we take, we may labour all the day. Now *Reading*, is the *meat*, and ſpirituall foode of our ſoule, becauſe they are the words of God which we *Read*; and we muſt not only *Read*, that we may ſpend that tyme well in *Reading*, but to the end that we may profit by it, all the day after. It will alſo be very well done, and it will giue vs great help towards all goodnes, that we lift vp our hart, to God, and deſire grace of him; to the end that it may be profitable to vs, and that the things which we *Reade*, may go imbruing, and bathing the very rootes of our hart; and that we may remayne more tenderly affected to vertue, and more *vnbeguiled* concerning the vanity of the world; & reſolued vpon thoſe things, which import, vs moſt. And ſo we read of the *bleſsed S. Gregory*, that before he went to *Reade*, he euer prepared himſelfe by *Prayer*; and vſed to ſay this verſe, *Declinate à me maligni, & ſcrutabor mandata Dei mei*. Departe from me, you maligne ſpirits, for I will conſider the law, and

Note.

Gregorius.

Pſa. 118. 115.

Com-

Commaundements of my God.

To the end, that we may more esteeme of this kind *of Reading*, & animate our selues more therunto, the *Saints* go comparing it, *with hearing the word of God preached*. And they say, that though *Reading* haue not that force, which the *liuing voice* hath, yet doth it enioy other commodityes, which *Sermons* haue not. For first, a man cannot alwayes haue a *Preacher* at hand, as he may haue a *good booke*. Secondly, the good speach of a *Preacher*, passeth through myne ears at once, & workes not therfore, so great effect in me. But that which is well said, in a *good booke*, I may reflect vpon, and reuolue it in my mind by *Reading* it, once, or twice agayne; and by ruminating, and pondering it, and so it will grow to make a great impression in me. Thirdly, by *Reading* in a good booke, I haue a free, and faythfull counsellor. And that other *Philosopher*, said well: *That which, many times, my friend, or my counsellor will not venter to tell me my booke tells me plainly, without feare, aduertising me of my vices, and defects, and chiding me on the one side, and exhor-*

Note.

Demetrius Phaler.

exhorting me on the other. Fourthly, by this *Reading* I am conuerſing with them, who wrote the booke.

Sometymes you may go, and haue a tyme of conuerſation with *S. Bernard*, another with *S. Gregory* another with *S. Baſill*; and you may ſtand hearing, & liſtning to them, as truly, as if you had beene their diſciple of old tyme: And ſo they ſay, and with great reaſon, *That good bookes, are a kind of publique treaſure*, for the great benefits and riches, which we may drawe from thence. To conclude, the profit and aduantage which groweth vpon this *Reading of ſpirituall bookes*, is ſo very great, that *S. Hierome*, treating of that interior *inflammation* of the ſoule, doth aske where this *inflamation*, and fire is? And he anſwereth, that there is no doubt to be made, but that it is conteyned in *holy Scriptures, the Reading wherof, inflames the ſoule, towards God, and ſo it remaineth purged from all vice.* And he bringeth, for proofe of this, that which the diſciples ſaid to one another, whē going to the Caſtle of *Emans*, Chriſt our Lord appeared to them, in forme of a *Pilgrime*, and went ſpea-

Hieron. epiſt. ad Damaſum Papam.

ſpeaking to them of holy Scripture. *Nonne cor noſtrum ardens erat in nobis, cum loqueretur in via, & aperiret nobis Scripturas?* Was not (ſay they) our hart all inflamed and in fire, whē he went ſpeaking and declaring the holy Scripture to vs, vpon the way? And he alſo bringeth thoſe words of the Prophet. *Eloquia Domini, eloquia caſta, argentum igne examinatum*; The words of our Lord, are chaſt wordes, and pure; they are as ſiluer, purifyed by the fire. Luc. 24. 32. Pſ. 11. 7.

And *S. Ambroſe* affirmeth, That this ſacred lection, is the life of the ſoule, by the teſtimony of Chriſt our Lord himſelfe. *Quod autem ſacrarum litterarū lectio vita ſit, Dominus teſtatur dicens, Ioannis ſexto, Verba quæ ego locutus ſum vobis, ſpiritus & vita ſunt.* The wordes which I haue ſayd to you, are ſpirit & life. To the end therfore, that we may lead a *ſpirituall life*, and that we may walke euer on, in *true ſpirit*; & be all kindled, and inflamed with the Loue of God, let vs giue our ſelues much to this kind of *Sacred Lection*; and let vs vſe it in ſuch ſorte, as hath been ſaid. Ambroſ. 15. ſer. Ioan. 6. 64.

Now by that, which you haue ſeene,

seene; it will follow; That they do very ill, who as soone as they haue *Read* ouer any good booke; do cast it into some corner, and say, *I haue dispatched that booke.* A good booke is not to be read ouer, only once. The second tyme that you read it, will profit you more then the first; and the third, then the second. Yea and it will be euer new to you, as they finde by experience, who desire to profit by *Reading.* And it is a good custome which some haue, who when they meete with any thing in any booke which moues them much, and giues them particuler satisfaction, do note it, and set it downe; to the end that they may always haue at hand some of the most substantiall things, and wherein they may finde the iuyce of deuotion, at more ease; & may haue some comfort in store for such occasions, and tymes as may occurre.

Note. We might bring many *Examples*, in confirmation of the great benefit & profit, which groweth from the *Reading of Spirituall bookes*; but I will only bring the Example of *S. Augustine*, which

August. li. 8. confess. c. 6.

which conteyneth much doctrine. That *Saynt* recounts, how a certaine *Cauallier*, an *African*, called *Potitianus*, comming one day to visite him, gaue him newes of the wonderfull things, which the world was saying of *S. Anthony*. And he added further, that one euening, while the was at *Treuers*, (imployed, vpon seing certayne publique sports, which were represented there) himselfe with three other *Courtiers*, friends of his, went out to take the aire. And that two, of the fower, did chance vpon the *Cell* of a certaine *Monke*; and finding there a booke, wherein the Life of *S. Anthony* was written, one of them began to read it, and instantly his hart was kindled with a holy kinde of loue. And being all angry with himselfe, he said thus to his friend. *Tell me I beseech thee, what is that which we pretend to obteyne, with all the paines we take? What is that, which we aymo at? In the hope of what, do we thus earnestly imploy our selues? Can we perhaps, haue a higher ambition in the Court, then to be Fauorites of the Emperor? And yet euen in that fortune, what is there, which is not top full of*

danger?

danger? And by how many dangers, do we ſtill proceed towards ſome greater danger? And how long ſhall we ſweat in this purſuite? But to be the friend and fauourite of God himſelfe, behold I am made ſo, if I will, euen at this very inſtant.

This he ſaid, and being growne bigge, and ſwolne, with the feruent deſire of bringing forth a new life, he reſtored his eyes to the booke, and read on, and was inwardly changed, and his mind was wholy diſpoſeſſed of worldely cares, as immediately afterwards appeared. For whilſt he was Reading, and rowling vp and downe, thoſe waues of his vnquiet hart, he would ſometymes groane deepely, and then agayne paweſe a while. And reſoluing at laſt, vpon a better courſe, he ſaid with a ſerene countenance, to his friend: Euen now haue I broken looſe, from thoſe hopes wherby hitherto we haue beene ſeized. I haue firmely reſolued, to be the ſeruant of God, and I will ſet vpon it, in this place, and at this very inſtant. As for thee, if thou canſt not be content, to imitate me, at leaſt diſſuade me not. But the other anſwered, that he would gladly ioyne himſelfe to him, as a cõpanion in the proſecuting of ſo honorable a war, & the obteyning of ſo noble a pay. And

both

both of them, did build vp that Spirituall Tower, with the treasure which is only able to do it, of forsaking all things, and following Christ our Lord. And that which is as strange, *they both had Spouses, who, as soone as they knew what these men had resolued, did consecrate themselues to God, by a vow of Chastity.*

This doth *S. Augustine* relate; and this Example was of so great efficacy, with himselfe, that soone after, he thus cryed out, with great exclamation, to another friend of his, *What is this which we indure? What is this? What haue we heard?* Surgunt indocti, & cælum rapiunt, & nos cum doctrinis nostris, sine corde ecce vbi volutamur in carne & sanguine: *The vnlearned men of the world, teare heauen from betweene our hands, and we, with our great knowledge, and learning, behold how without braynes, or courage, we are contented still to wallow, in flesh and blood.*

But with this alteration, and feeling, the Saint relates, *how he entred into a Garden, there adioyning, and did spread himselfe, at the foote of a certaine figtree; and (letting loose the reynes to teares)*

he beganne, with great affliction, and ſorrow of hart, to cry out thus to God, and ſay: And thou, O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord? Wilt to be angry with vs for euer? Remember not Lord, our old iniquityes. And ſtill he repeated theſe words, How long; How long: shall I ſay, To morrow? Why not euen now? Why, euen at this inſtant, is there not an end of my vncleaneneſſe? Whileſt he was ſaying this, in the moſt bitter feeling of his hart, he heard a voyce which ſayd to him. Take vp and read, Take vp and read. He then roſe vp (as himſelfe relateth) *to take vp and read, in that holy booke, which lay before him*; For he had heard it related of the ſame *S. Anthony*, that by once *Reading* of the *Goſpell*, (which he fell vpon) as it were by chance which ſayd, *Goe and ſell all that thou haſte, and giue it to the poore, and follow me, and thou ſhalt haue treaſure in heauen*; *he determined to leaue all things, and to follow Chriſt our Lord.*

Matt. 19. 21.

And ſo *S. Auguſtine*, being moued much by this *Example*, & more by the *voyce*, which he had heard, ſayth, That he toooke vp the booke, and read in it. And there did God infuſe

ſo

so great a light into his soule, that leauing all things of this world, he deliuered himselfe wholy vp to the seruice of our Lord.

The end of this Treatise of Mentall Prayer.

27 AP 58

A TREATISE
Of the preſence of God:
Written by the ſame Authour.

CHAP. I.

Of the excellency of this Exerciſe: and the great beneſits, which are conteyned therein.

QVAERITE Dominum, & confirmamini; quærite faciem eius ſemper. Seeke God (ſayth the Prophet *Dauid*,) with perſeuerance, and ſtrength; be euer ſeeking his face: the *face our Lord*, which as *S. Auguſtine* ſayth, is the *Preſence of our Lord*; and *Pſa. 104. 4.* *Auguſt. ſuper Pſal. 104.*

and ſo to be euer ſeeking the *face of our Lord*, is *to be euer going in his Preſence*, and conuerting our harts to him, with *deſire*, and *loue*.

Iſychius, in his laſt *Century* ſayth, & ſo doth alſo *S. Bonauenture*; *That to be alwayes performing this Exerciſe of the Preſence of God, is to begin to be bleſſed here on earth, as the glorious ſpirits are, in heauen.* For the felicity of thoſe *Saints*, conſiſteth in *ſeeing God* perpetually, without euer once looſing the ſight of him. But now, ſince we cannot *ſee God* in perfect charity, nor *as he is in himſelfe* (for this is only proper to thoſe glorious ſpirits) yet at leaſt, let vs imitate them, the beſt we can, according to the vttermoſt of our frailty; and let vs procure, to be allwayes beholding, reſpecting, and louing him. So that, as our Lord God created vs, to be eternally in his preſence, & to enioy him in heauen; ſo was it alſo his pleaſure, that, here on earth, we ſhould haue an image, & modell of that bleſſedneſſe, by walking euer in his ſight, reuearing, and beholding him, though in obſcure manner. *Videmus nunc per ſpeculum*

Iſychius. Bonau to. 2. opuſc. li. 2 de profectu Religioſorum. ca. 20.

1. Cor. 13. 12.

culum in ænigmate, tunc autem, facie ad faciem. We now behold, and ſee God, by fayth, as in a glaſſe; but afterwards, we ſhall ſee him cleerely, and face to face. *Iſta eſt meritum illa præmium.* That cleere viſion, (as ſayth *Iſychius*) is the reward; and the glory and bleſſednes for which we hope; this other obſcure ſight, is matter of merit to vs, wherby we muſt growe to obteyne that other.

But yet ſtill, in fine, we muſt imitate thoſe bleſſed ſpirits, to the beſt of our power; whilſt we procure not to looſe the ſight of God, in the workes which we are doing. Iuſt ſo, as the holy Angells, who are ſent downe to our ſuccour, for our defence, and help; are, in ſuch ſort imployed vpon thoſe miniſteryes, as that yet withall, they neuer looſe the ſight of God. As the Angell Raphael ſaid to Toby, *Videbar quidem vobiſcum manducare, & bibere; ſed ego cibo inuiſibili, & potu, qui hominibus videri non poteſt, vtor.* I ſeemed indeed, to haue beene eating, and drinking with you; but I, the while, did ſerue my ſelfe of an inuiſible meate, and of a kind of drinke, which cannot be diſcerned by

Tob.12.13. Mat.18. 10.

humaine eyes. They are euer susteyning themselues vpon God; *semper vident faciem patris mei, qui in cælis est.* And so also, although we eate and drinke, and conuerse, and negotiate with me, and though it seeme, that we enterteyne, and imploy our selues therein, must yet procure, that, that be not our foode, and entertaynement; but another food and entertaynement, which is inuisible, and which men discouer not; and this is, *That we be euer beholding, and louing God, and accomplishing his most holy will.*

Great was the accounte, and practise which the *Saints*, and the ancient *Patriarches* made, of going alwayes *in the Presence of God Prouidebam Dominum* Psa. 15. 8. *in conspectu meo semper; quoniam a dextris est mihi, ne commouear.* The *Royall Prophet* did not content himselfe, with praising God seauen tymes in the day; but withall he procured to haue God alwayes present with him. And so continuall was this *Exercise*, with those *Saynts*, that this was also their common phrase of speach, *Viuit Dominus, in* 3. Reg. 17. *conspectu cuius sto*. Our Lord liueth, in whose

whose presence I am.

The benefits, and profits are great, which flowe from our going continually *in Gods Presence*, whilst we consider that he is euer looking on vs; and therefore did the *Saynts* labour in it so much. This alone, sufficeth to make, that a man be very well ordered, and composed in all his actions. For tell me, what seruant is there, who will not carry himselfe exactly well, vnder the eye of his Lord? Who will not do that which he commaunds? or who will dare to offend him to his teeth? Or what theefe will presume to steale, whilst the Iudge hath an eye vpon his hands? 4. Reg. 3. 14.

Now therfore, since God is *so euer looking vpon* vs, and since he is our *Iudge*, and since he is *Omnipotent*, and can commaund that the earth may open and swallowe a man vp into Hell; Yea, and since he hath indeed done so sometymes, to such as durst offend him, what is he, that will dare to offend him any more? And so *S. Augustine* sayth: *O Lord when I consider with attention, that thou art euer looking vpon me, and* Note. *Aug. Sol. 14.*

that

that thou art watching ouer me, night and day; and that, with ſo great care, as if there were neither in heauen, nor earth, any other creature for thee to gouerne, but me alone; When I conſider well, that all my deeds, deſires, and thoughts, lye open and cleere before thee, I am all fulfilled with feare, and ouerwhelmed with shame. Without doubt, we are caſt into a very ſtreight obligation, of liuing with great rectitude, & iuſtice, by the conſideration of our doing all things, vnder the eye of that Iudge, who ſeeth all things, and from whome, nothing is able to hide it ſelfe. If in this world, the preſence of a graue, and qualifyed perſon, will keep vs in order, what will not the *Preſence of God* be able to do?

S. Hierome, vpon that place, where God ſaid to *Hieruſalem*, by the *Prophet Ezechiel*, *Meiq; oblita es*, Thou haſt forgotten me, ſayth thus; *Memoria enim Dei, excludit cuncta flagitia.* The memory of God diſmiſſeth, and diſchargeth all ſinne. The ſame alſo doth *S. Ambroſe* ſay. And elſwhere *S. Hierome* ſayth againe. *Certè quando peccamus, ſi cogitaremus Deum videre, & eſſe præſentem, numquam*

Ezech. 22.

quam quod ei diſpliceret faceremus. The memory of God and the watching ſtill in his Preſence, is a meanes of ſo great efficacy, that if we did but conſider that God is preſent, and doth behold vs, we would neuer aduenture to do that thing, which might diſpleaſe him. This alone, ſufficed to make that ſinfull woman *Thais*, giue ouer her bad life, and betake herſelfe to a courſe of pennance, in the wildernes. Holy *Iob* ſaid thus: *Nonne ipſe conſiderat vias tuas, & cunctos greſſus meos dinumerat?* God ſtands beholding me, and as a true ey-witnes counts the paces which I make; and who then is that man, who will preſume to ſinne, or to do any thing amiſſe? *Iob.* 31. 4.

On the other ſide, all the diſorder, and perdition of the wicked, doth proceed from their not conſidering, that God is *Preſent*, & beholdeth them; according to that which the *holy Scripture* doth ſo often repeate, in the perſon of wicked men: *Et dixiſti, non eſt qui videat me. Et non videbit nouiſſima noſtra.* And ſo did *S. Hierome* note it, vpon the ſeauenth *Chapter of Ezechiel*; where the Note. *Iſa.* 47. 10. *Ierem.* 12. 4. Hieromè.

the Prophet, reproouing *Ierusalem* for the many vices, and sinnes, which it was subiect to, growes to say, *That the cause of them all, was for that, that Citty had forgotten God.* And he assigneth also the same cause, whē he interpreteth many other places of *scripture.* For as a horse without a bridle, and a ship without a sterne runs vpon precipices, and rockes; so if you take this bridle, out of the mouth of man, he runs headlong after his owne inordinate appetites, and passions. *Non est Deus in conspectu eius, inquinatæ sunt viæ illius in omni tempore,* sayth the *Prophet Dauid.* He carrieth not God before his eyes, he considereth him not, as present before him, and therefore are his ways (which are his workes) all defiled still, with sinnes.

Psa. 9. 26.

The remedy, which the blessed *S. Basil* giues, in many places of his workes, against all temptations, and troubles, and for all the occasions and necessityes, which may present themselues, is the *Presence of God.* And therfore, if thou desire, a ready, and compendious way, for the obteyning of perfe-

Note.

perfection, and which may conteyne, and lock vp, in it selfe, the force & efficacy of all other meanes, this is that. And for such, did God giue it thus to *Abraham*; *Ambula coram me, & esto perfectus*; Walke before me, & thou shalt be perfect. The holy Scripture doth here, (as in many other places) take the *Imperatiue*, for the *Future*, to expresse home, the infallibility of the successe. *It is so certaine, that thou shalt be perfect, if alwayes thou wilt goe beholding of God, and considering that he is euer beholding thee; that euen, from this instant, thou maist account, that thou shalt be perfect.* For iust, as the *Stars* do, from the aspect of the *Sunne* with is present to them, draw light, wherby they are resplendent, both within, and without their owne *bodyes*; and do also get other vertues, wherby they make influence vpō the *earth*; so do iust, and vertuous men (who are as so many *Stars* in the *Church* of God) from the sight of God, and by considering him *euer present*, and by conuerting their thoughts and desires to him, draw light, wherby in their interior, (which God sees) they shine with Gen. 17. 1.

with reall, & ſolide vertues; & in their exteriour, (which men ſee) they ſhine with all innocency, and decency; and they draw ſtrength, and force from thence, for the edification, and profit of others.

There is nothing in the whole world, which doth ſo properly declare the neceſſity that we haue, of continuing euer in the *Preſence* of God, as this which followes. Behould the dependance, which the *Moone* hath vpon the *Sun*; & the neceſſity, to which it is ſubiect, of being euer in preſence of it. The *Moone*, of it ſelfe, hath no clarity, but receiues it all from the *Sunne*, according to the proportion of the aſpect, which it hath from thence. And it worketh vpon inferiour bodyes, according to the rate of clarity, which it receaues from the *Sunne*; and ſo do the effects therof, increaſe or faile, according to the *full*, or *wayning* of the ſame light. And when any thing doth place it ſelfe aboue the *Moone*, which may depriue it of the ſight, & view of the *Sunne*, at that inſtant, is the luſtre and clarity therof *ecclipſed*; & therewith

Note.

withall, a great part alſo failes, of the efficacy, which it had to worke, by meanes of the *Sunne*. Now in the ſelfe ſame manner, doth it paſſe betweene the *ſoule*, and *God*, who is the true *Sunne* of the *ſoule*.

For this cauſe it is, that the *Saynts*, do ſo earneſtly recommend this *Exerciſe* to vs. *S. Ambroſe*, and *S. Bernard* diſcourſing of the continuance, & perſeuerance which we are to vſe herein, ſay thus; *Sicut nullum eſſe momentum, quo homo non vtatur, vel fruatur Dei bonitate & miſericordia; ſic nullum debet eſſe momẽtum, quo eam præſentem non habeat in memoria.* As there is no pointe, or moment of tyme, wherein man enioyeth not the goodneſſe and mercy of God; ſo ought there not to be any pointe, or moment of tyme, wherein he ought not to haue God preſent to him, in his memory. And *S. Bernard* ſayth els where. *In omni actu, vel cogitatu ſuo, ſibi Deum adeſſe memoretur; & omne tempus, quo de ipſo non cogitat, perdidiſſe ſe computet.* A Religious man, muſt procure, in all his thoughts, and in all his deeds, to remember that he hath God preſent with

Amb. lib. de dignitate con.

with him; and all that tyme, wherein he thinketh not of God, he is to hold for loſt. God doth neuer forget vs, & it is but reaſon, that we procure to be neuer vnmindfull of him.

Aug. Pſa. 31.8. *S. Auguſtine*, vpon the 31. *Pſalme*, *Firmabo ſuper te oculos meos*, ſayth: *Non à te auferam oculos meos, quia & tu non auferis à me oculos tuos.* I will not, O Lord, withdraw myne eyes from thee, becauſe thou doſt not withdraw thine eyes from me. Continually, will I lodge them fixed, & firme vpon thee, *Pſ. 24. 15.* as thy Propher did, who ſaid: *Oculi mei ſemper ad Dominum*; Mine eyes are euer vpon our Lord. *S. Gregory Nazianzen* *Gregor. Naz. in ora. Theologica.* ſayth: *Non tam ſæpe reſpirare, quàm Dei meminiſſe debemus*; As often ought we to remember God, yea and more often, then we fetch our breath. For as we haue need of reſpiration, for the refreſhing of our harts, and for the tempering of our naturall heat; ſo are we in continuall neceſſity, of reſorting to God, by *Prayer*, for the reſtraint of that inordinate heate of concupiſcence, which is mouing and inſiſing vs to ſinne.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Wherein consisteth the Exercise, or Practise of going alwayes, in the Presence of God.

TO the end that we may serue our selues the better, of this exercise, or practise, it wilbe necessary to declare wherin it consists. It consisteth in two *Acts*, the one is, of the *Vnderstanding*, the other is of the *Will*. The first *Act*, is of the *Vnderstanding*. For this is euer requisite and presupposed, for the performing, of any act of the *Will*, as we are taught by *Philosophy*. The first thing therfore, is to be, to consider with the *Vnderstanding*, *That God is both heere, & euery where els. That he filleth the whole world, and that he is all, in all in euery parte, and in euery creature, how small soeuer it may be.*

Note.

Tract. 9. cap. 7.

Of this, an *Act* is to be made, because this is a certayne *Truth*, which *Fayth* propoundeth to be belieued by vs. *Non enim longe est ab vnoquoq; nostrum, in ipso enim, viuimus, mouemur, & sumus;*

Act. 17. 17.

sayth the Apostle *S. Paul.* You are not to imagine, or fansy God, as one who were farre from you; or as if he were *without* you; for he is *within you.* Confess. l. 10. c. 27. *S. Augustine* confesseth thus, *I sought that without me, O Lord, which yet was within me.* Within you is God; and more *present*, and more intrinsecally, & more intimately is God in me, then my selfe. *In him we live, and move, and haue our being.* He it is, who giueth *Life*, to all that which *liues*; and he, who giueth *strēgth* to all which hath any *strength*; and he who giues *being*, to all that which *is.* And if he were not *present*, susteyning all things, they all would leaue to be, and returne to their *nothing*. Consider therfore, that thou art all, full of God; inuironed & compassed in with God, and as it were swimming in God. *Pleni sunt cæli & terra gloria tua*, are very good wordes to this purpose: *The heauens, and the earth, are full of thy glory.*

Note. Some, to help themselues, more in this, do consider all the world to be full of God, as indeed it is; and they imagine themselues, to be in the middest of this infinite *sea of God*, circled, & hemmed

hemmed in by him, in such sort, as a *sponge*, in the middest of the *sea* might be, all bathed, and full of water, and besides compassed in, and enclosed by water, on all sides. This comparison is not ill, for the rate of our weake vnderstanding. But yet it falleth short, & reacheth not, by a great deale; to declare that, wherof we are speaking. For that *Sponge*, in the middest of the *Sea*, if it mount vpwards, it is at an end, aboue; if it descend downeward, it findes an end, below; and it meets with a *stay*, if it go eyther on the one side, or the other; but in God, thou shalt find nothing, of all this. *Si ascendero in cælum, tu illic es; si descendero in infernum ades; si sumpsero pennas meas diliculo, & habitauero in extremis maris, etenim manus tua deducet me, & tenebit me dextera tua.* If I mount vp to heauen, thou art there O Lord; if I descend downe to hell, thou art also there; if I take wings, and passe to the extreme sides of the sea, thither will thy hand carry me, and there thy right hand will hold me. There is no end, or terme in God, because he is infinite and immense. Besides, in fine,

since the *Sponge* we spake of, is a *body*, it cannot be wholly penetrated by the *water*; which is another *Body*; whereas we, are in all, and through all, penetrated by Almighty God, who is *pure spirit*. But yet neuertheles, these comparisons, and the like (how short soeuer they fall, of expressing the thing,) are good, and do giue greate helpe, for the vnderstanding in some sort, of the infinite immensenesse of God, and how he is *present*, & most intimately in vs, and in all things. And therfore, *S. Augustine* bringeth these comparisons.

Epist. 57. ad Dardanum. & l. 7. Confess. cap. 5.

But yet, we are to obserue in the performance of this *Exercise* of *the Presence of God*, that there is no necessity, to forme any *concett*, with the *imagination*, or any *representation* at all, of God; feigning that he is here, at our side, or in any other determinate place, or that he is in this, or the other *forme*. There are some, who imagine eyther before themselues, or on the one side that Christ *Iesus* our redeemer, is with the, and that he goes with them, and is euer looking vpon what they do, and

in

in this manner, they euer go in the *Presence of God.* Of these, some *imagine*, that they haue *Christ crucifyed* before them; others, that he is tyed to the *Pillar*; others, that he is *sweating* drops of bloud in his *Prayer* of the *Garden*; others, in some other part of his *Passion*; or els in some cheerefull *mystery* of his most holy life; euery one, according to his inclination, and deuotion. Or els, some one tyme they imagine him in some one fashion, & at another tyme, in some other.

And although this be very profitable, for such as know how to do it wel; yet (ordinarily speaking) it is not that, which is best for vs. For all these *formes*, and *imaginations* of *corporall things*, do toyle and weary men; and many tymes, do much trouble their heads. A *Saint Bernard*, or *a Saint Bonauenture*, without doubt, knew better how to do this, then we; and they found much facility, and ease in it; and so they would be able to go into those holes, of the *wounds* of Christ our Lord, and into his *holy side*; and there, would they find their rest, their refuge, Note.

and their ſafe retrayt; eſteeming themſelues to heare thoſe words of the *ſpouſe* in the *Canticles*, ſpoken to themſelues: *Surge amica mea, ſpecioſa mea, & veni; columba mea in foraminibus petræ, in cauerna macceriæ.* At other tymes, they would imagine the foote of the *Croſſe*, to be faſtned and rooted in their *harts*, and that they, the while, were receiuing by their mouth, with extreme ſweetnes, thoſe drops of *bloud*, which ran, and ſtreamed from thoſe fountaines, of the Sauiour of the world. *Haurietis aquas in gaudio, de fontibus Saluatoris.* Thoſe *Saints* I ſay, did very well, in doing thus, and they were happy in it; but if you will be going on, all day, in theſe conſiderations, and with this kind of *Preſence of God*; perhaps, that for one day, or moneth, which you may paſſe after this faſhion, you will looſe your *Prayer* for a whole yeare. For it may coſt you, the breaking of your braynes.

Iſa. 12. 3.

Note.

We may ſee how great reaſon there is, why we ſhould be carefull, in giuing this leſſon of caution, ſince euen for making a kind of *ſtructure* or *compoſition of place*, (which is one of the *Preambles*

bles, or *Preludes* of *Prayer*, wherby we are wont to make that matter present to vs, wherof we are to meditate, imagyning that the matter doth really passe before vs there) they who treat of *Prayer*, are carefull to aduertise vs, that we do not, with an attention too much bent, fix our imagination vpon the *figure*, or *representation* of those *corporall things*, wherof we meane to thinke, for the danger, which there is to breake our braynes; and for other inconueniẽces, of *illusions*, which grow sometymes out of this roote. If therfore, for the making of a *Preamble*, or *Prelude* of *Prayer*, (which vseth to be passed ouer, so very soone, and the man, being at that tyme, in quietnes, and at good leasure, without hauing any other thing to possesse his mind,) there be need of so much circumspection, and caution; what will there be, for one who hath a mind to conserue this kind of *composition*, for the whole day, and in the middest of all his other businesse?

But now, this other *Presence of God*, wherof we treate, excludes all these

Note. *imaginations*, & indeed is very far from them all. For now we treate, of a *Presence of God*, as *God*. And first, we need not feigne to our selues, that he is here; but we must beleeue it, for so he is indeed. *Christ our Lord*, as man, is in *heauen*, and in the *B. Sacrament* of the *Altar*; but he is not euery where. And therfore, when we imagine, Christ our Lord, as man, to be present with vs, it is an *imagination*, and a thing which we faigne to our selues. But now, as God, he is *present* heer; and he is within me, and he is in all places, & he fills them all. *Spiritus Domini repleuit orbem terrarum*. We haue no cause, in this case, to feigne, that which is not; but to actuate our minds in the firme, & frequent beliefe, of that which is.

Sap. 1. 7.

Secondly, the humanity of Christ our Lord, may be fancied, and figured by the *imagination*, because he hath a body, and a figure; but God, as God, cannot be *imagined*, or figured, as he is, because he hath no *body*, nor *figure*, but is *a pure spirit*. Nay we cannot so much as imagine an *Angell*, no nor *our owne soule*, as indeed it is, because it is a *spirit*;

and

and how much lesse then, shall we be able to imagine, or frame a conceit of, how God is.

But how then, are we to consider, that God as God, is still *present* with vs? I say there is no more to be done, but only to produce an act of *Fayth*, supposing already, that God is *present* there; since our *Fayth* tells vs so, without labouring to know how, or in what fashion that is; as *S. Paul* affirmes, that *Moyses* did. *Qui inuisibilem, tanquam videns, sustinuit. He considered God, who is inuisible, and had him present still, as if he had seene him.* But yet so, as that he would not striue to know, or *imagine*, how that was; but, as when a mā is speaking with some friend of his, by night, without reflecting how that is, and not considering it; but only reioycing, and delighting in the conuersation and presence of his friend, who he knowes is present, with him there. In this sort, are we to consider God *present* with vs. It is inough that we know, our frend is there, that we may enioy him. Do not dwell vpon thinking, how that is. You will not light

Note.

light vpon it, for it is yet, by night, for vs. Do but stay till it be light, and when the morning of the other life appeares; he will then be discouered, and we shalbe able *to see him cleerely, as he is. Cùm apparauerit, similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est.* For this, did God appeare to *Moyses*, in obscurity, and in a cloud; that you may not looke to *see* him, but only *believe* him to be present.

All this which we haue saide, belongs to the first act of *Vnderstanding*, which must be presupposed. But it must be considered also heere, that the chiefe part of this *Exercise*, doth not consist in this. For not only is the *Vnderstanding* to imploy it selfe, in behoulding God *present*; but a man must also imploy the *Will*, by aspiring to God, and by louing him, and by vniting himselfe to him. And in these acts of the *Will*, this *Exercise* doth principally consist, whereof we shall treate, in the next Chapter.

CHAP.

Chap. III.

Of the acts of the Will, wherein this Exercise doth principally consist; and how we are to imploy our selues therein.

Saint *Bonauenture*, in his *Mysticall Theology* sayth, that the *Acts* of the *Will*, wherewith we must lift vp our selues to God, in this holy *Exercise*, are certayne ardent desires of the hart, wherby the soule doth thirst, to be vnited with God, in *perfect loue*. Certayne *inflamed affections*, they are; certayne *sighes*, which breake out of the very bowells of the soule, wherewith it cals vpon God. Certayne *pious, and amorous springings of the will*, wherewith, as with certayne *spirituall wings*, she reacheth, & stretcheth her selfe vpward; and goes approaching, and vniting herselfe, more and more, with God. These desires, these vehement, and enflamed affections of the hart, the Saints do call *Aspirations*. Because by them, the soule raiseth herselfe vp to God, which signifyeth the same, with *aspiring* towards Note.

wards him. S. *Bonauenture* also sayth, they are therfore called *Aspirations*, because, as by respiring we do without deliberation, draw our breath, & that interior aire of our body; so do we also with great agility, and sometymes without any deliberation at all, (or in effect without any) drawe out these inflamed desires, from the most internall part of our soule.

These *Aspirations*, and desires, a man declares by certayne *Prayers*, which are short, and frequent, and they are called *iaculatory*, *Raptim iaculatus*, sayth S. *Augustine*. Because they are as arrowes, or fiery darts, which spring from the hart, and at an instant they are shot of, and sent vp to God. Those old *Monkes*, according to the relation of *Cassian*, did much vse these *Prayers*. *Breues quidem, sed creberrimæ*. And they esteemed, and made great account therof: Partely, because they were short, and did not weary the brayne; and partly, because they were made with feruour, and with an erected spirit, and at an instant they are sent into the *high Presence of Almighty God*, in such sort, as that the di-

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uell hath no tyme to trouble him, that makes them; nor to cast any impediment into his hart. S. *Augustine* de liureth certaine words which are worthy of Consideration, with such, as are in Exercise of Prayer. *Ne ille vigilans, & erecta intentio, quæ tamen necessaria est orationi, per productiores moras hebetetur.* Least that vigilant, and sharpe attention, (which yet is needfull for him that meanes to pray, with dew respect, and reuerence) go not lessing, or loosing it selfe, as it happeneth sometymes, in long *prayer*. With these *iaculatory Prayers* therfore, did those holy *Monkes*, go euer on in this *exercise*, lifting vp their harts, very frequently to God, and treating, and conuersing with him.

Aug. epi. ad Probam. Christianam, 79.

Abbas Isaac. collat. 10. cap. 10.

This way, of going in the *Presence of God*, is (generally speaking) more fit for vs, more easy, and more profitable. It will therfore be necessary, to proceed in declaring the vse, and practise of this *Exercise*. *Cassian* placeth it, in this verse, which the *Church* repeateth in euery hower, of her *Diuine Office*, *Deus in adiutorium meum intende. Domine ad adiuuandum me festina.* Art thou entring into

Cass. collat. 10. cap. 10.

in to any busines, wherein there may be difficulty, or danger? Desire thus of God, that he will helpe thee well out of it, *O Lord be carefull to succour me: O Lord be not slacke to giue me help.* We are in need of the fauour of God, for all things; and so are we, euer to be desiring his assistance. And *Cassian* sayth, that this verse, is excellent, and highly to the purpose; for declaring all the affects of our mind, in whatsoeuer state, and in whatsoeuer occasion, or accident, we may find our selues. Because hereby we inuoke the aide of God; Heerby we humble our selues, and we acknowledge our necessity, and misery; Heerby we raise our selues, and we confide to be heard, and fauoured by Almighty God. Hereby we kindle our selues, in the loue of our Lord, who is our protection and refuge. Against all the combats, and temptations, which may present themselues, you haue heere, a most strong buckler, an impenetrable coate-armour, and an inexpugnable wall. And therfore you are still to be carrying it, both in your mouth, and in your hart; and this is to

Note.

be

be your constant, & continuall *Prayer*; and your way of going still, *in the Presence of God*.

S. Basil, placeth the practise of this *Exercise*, in that, at all tymes, we take occasion to remember God. Art thou eating? giue thankes to God. Dost thou cloth thy selfe? giue thanks to God. Art thou going to take the aire, or into thy Garden? blesse thou God, who made it. Doest thou looke vp to heauen? doest thou looke towards the *Sunne*? then do thou praise the Creatour of all things. When thou goest to sleepe, and whensoeuer thou dost wake, lifte vp thy hart to God. Note.

Now forasmuch, as in spirituall lif, there are three wayes, *The Purgatiue way*, which belongeth to *beginners*; the *Illuminatiue way*, which belongeth to such as are *Proficient*; & the *Vnitiue way*, which belongeth to such as are in some degree of *perfection*; there are spirituall directours, who assigne three kinds of *Aspirations*, or *Iaculatory Prayers*. Some, which are addressed towards the obteyning of pardon for sinne, and towards the purging of the soule from

vice,

vice, and terrene affections, which belong to the *Purgatiue way*. Others, which are addressed towards the obteyning of *vertues*, and ouercomming temptations, and vndertaking of difficultyes, and troubles, for the exercise of piety; which belong to the *Illuminatiue way*. And others, which addresse vs, towards the obteyning of an *vnion* of the soule with God, by the bond of perfect loue; and these, belong to the *Vnitiue way*. And this they ordayne, to the end that euery one may imploy himselfe in that *exercise*, which is most agreable, and fit for his owne disposition, and state.

Note.

But yet know this the while; that how perfect soeuer a man be, he may safely exercise himselfe in sorrow for his sinnes, and in desiring pardon of God for them, and begging grace that he may neuer offend him, and this wilbe a very good Exercise of his mind, and very acceptable to God. And both he, and that other man, who is still procuring but to *purge* his soule from vice, and inordinate affections; & he also, who laboureth to obteyne *Ver-*

tue,

tue, may also exercise himselfe in acts of the *Loue of God*, to make that other *exercise*, which he is chiefly about, more easy and sweete. Therfore all men may imploye themselues, sometymes, in this *purgatiue exercise*, by making such *Acts* as these: *O Lord, that I had neuer offended thee. Do not permit, O my Lord, that euer I may offẽd thee any more. Let me dye as much as thou wilt, but neuer let me sinne against thee. Let it please thy diuine maiesty, that I may rather die a thousand deaths, then euer commit one mortall sinne.*

At other tymes, one may raise his hart to God, by giuing him thankes for all his benefits, both generall and particuler, which he hath receiued; or els by begging the gifte of some *vertue*; sometymes profound *humility*; at other tymes *perfect Obedience*; at other tymes, *Patience*; at others, *Charity*.

Agayne, at other tymes, a man may raise his mind to God, by acts of *loue*, and *conformity* to his most holy will, saying this, or the like. *Dilectus meus mihi, & ego illi. Non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat. Quid enim mihi est in cælo, & à te quid volui super terram?* These, and such o-

Cant. 2. 16.
Luc. 22. 42.
Psa. 72. 25.

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thers, are very good *aspirations*, and *iaculatory prayers*; wherby a man may go alwayes, in this *exercise* of the *Presence of God*. And they vse to be the best, and most efficacious, which the hart, being moued by Almighty God, doth conceaue within it selfe; although it be not done, in words so well composed and ordered, as those which we haue heere set downe.

Note.

And there is also, no necessity at all, that these *iaculatoryes*, should be many, in number. For one alone, being very often repeated, and with great ardour of mind, may suffice a man for the going in this *exercise* may dayes, yea and euen all his life. If you finde your selfe well, with alwayes saying those words of the Apostle, *O Lord what wilt thou haue me do?* Or those other of the *Spouse, My beloued to me, and I to him*: Or els those words of the *Prophet*, *What haue I to desire O Lord, in heauen, or in earth, but only thee?* you haue need of no more; deteyne your selfe here, and entertayne your selfe herein; and let this be your continuall *Exercise*, and your going in *the Presence of God*.

Note.

CHAP.

Chap. IV.

The practise of this Exercise *is further declared, and heere a way is laid downe, of going in the* Presence of God, *very easy, very profitable, and of much Perfection.*

Amongst other *Aspirations*, and *Iaculatory Prayers*, which we may vse; that one, is a very principall one, and very much to purpose, for the practise of this Exercise, which is taught vs, by the *Apostle Saint Paul*, in his first *Epistle* to the *Corinthians*. *Siue manducatis, siue bibitis, siue aliud quid facitis, omnia ad gloriam Dei facite.* Whether you eate or drinke, or whatsoeuer els you do, let all be done to Gods glory. Procure, in all things that you do, or at least the most frequently that you can, to lift vp your hart to God, saying; *For thee O Lord, do I this. To content thee, and to please thee. Because thou wilt haue it so. Thy will, O my Lord, is mine; Thy contentment is mine; I haue no other will, nor no other not-will, but that only, which thou wilt, and that which thou wilt not. This is all my delight, all my* 1. Cor. 10. 31. Note.

contentment, all my ioy, the accomplishment of thy will, to please thee; and there is no other thing but this, for which I care; nor which I can desire; nor which is worth, so much, as the looking on, eyther in heauen, or in earth.

This is a good way, of going allwayes in *the Presence of God*, and very easy, and very profitable, and of much perfection. For it is to go, in a continuall exercise of the loue of God. And because I haue treated hereof elsewhere, I will only add in this place, that this is one of the best, and most profitable wayes of going euer in *Prayer*, of all the wayes that can be thought. For it seemes, that there wanted no other thing, to extoll and canonize this *Exercise*, but only to say, that by it, we shalbe in that continuall *prayer*, which Christ our Lord demaunds of vs, in the holy *Gospell. Oportet semper orare, & non deficere.* For what better Prayer, can there be, then that one should be euer desiring, the greatest honor, and *glory* of God, and to be euer conforming himselfe, to Gods will. Not hauing any other, eyther will, or not-will, but that which God will,

Tract. 3. cap. 8. & Tract. 8. cap. 4.

Luc. 18. 1.

will, and wisheth not, and that all his contentment, and ioy, is the contentment, and good pleasure, of our Lord God.

Therfore sayth a learned Doctour, and with great reason, that he who shall persuere with care, in those affects, and interiour desires, shall reape so abundant fruite therby, that in short tyme, he will feele his hart, all conuerted, and changed; and will find therein, a particuler auersion frō the world; and a singuler affection to Almighty God. This is to begin already, to be a kind of Cittizen of heauen, and a standing seruant, in the house of God. *Iam non estis hospites, & aduenæ, sed estis ciues Sanctorum, & domestici Dei.* These are those *Courtiers*, whome *S. Iohn* saw in the *Apocalyps*, who *carried the name of God, written in their forheads*, which is the continuall memory, and Presence of God. *Et videbunt faciem eius, & nomen eius in frontibus eorum.* For their conuersation, and discourse, is not now, on earth, but in heauen. *Nostra autem conuersatio in cælis est. Non contemplantibus nobis, ea quæ videntur, sed ea quæ non videntur:*

Dionis. Richel. l. 1. de contempla. cap. 25.

Eph. 2. 9.

Apoc. 12. 4.

Philip. 3.

2. Cor. 4. 18.

quæ enim videntur temporalia ſunt, quæ autem non videntur, æterna.

Note. It is further to be conſidered in this *Exerciſe*, that when we produce theſe *Acts* ſaying: *For thee O Lord, do I this*; *For thy loue*; *Becauſe thou wilt haue it ſo*, & the like; we are to do them, and ſay them, as one who ſpeakes to God, already *preſent*; and not as one, who raiſeth his hart, or his thought, to ſend it far off, or without himſelfe. This aduiſe is of great importance in this *Exerciſe*. For this is properly, to go in the *Preſence of God*, and this is that, which makes this *Exerciſe*, eaſy, and ſweete, and which makes it moue, and profit more. Yea, euen in our other Prayers, when we meditate of Chriſt vpon the *Croſſe*, or at the *Pillar*; they who treate of *Prayer*, giue counſaile, that we ſhould not *imagine*, that to be at *Ieruſalem*, and that it paſſed, a thouſand, and ſo many hundred yeares agoe; for this wearyes more, and moues leſſe: But we are to imagine it, as preſent, where we are; & that it paſſeth there before vs; and that we heare the ſtrokes of the ſcourges, & the knocks of the hammers. And if we medi-

meditate the *Exerciſe* of *death*; they ſay that we are to imagine, that we are already vpon the point to dye, and giuen ouer by the *Phyſitians*; and with the *holy candle* in our hand. How much more reaſon then, ſhall it be, that in this *Exerciſe* of the *Preſence of God*, we performe thoſe *acts*, which we haue named, not as men, who ſpeake with an abſent perſon, and that far off from vs; but as men who ſpeake with God *preſent*; ſince the very *Exerciſe* it ſelfe, requires it, and in reality of *Truth*, he is *Preſent*.

Chap. V.

Of ſome differences, and aduantages, which there are, in this Exerciſe, of going in the Preſence of God.

TO the end that we may the better ſee the perfection, and profit of this *Exerciſe*, and way of going in the *Preſẽce of God* which we haue ſhewed; and to the end that it may be the more declared, we will touch ſome differences, and aduantages, which there Note.

are therein. The firſt is this. In the other *Exerciſes* of the *Preſence of God*, which ſome vſe to propound; all ſeemes to be but an *act* of the *Vnderſtanding*, and all ſeemes to end in this, that they *imagine the Preſence of God*.

But this *Exerciſe*, preſuppoſeth, this *Act* of the *vnderſtanding*, & of *fayth*, *That God is preſent* and then it goes further on, and maketh *Acts* of the *Loue of God*; and in theſe, it doth principally conſiſt. And this doth euidently appeare, to be better, and more profitable then the former. Iuſt ſo, as we ſaid in the *Treatiſe of Prayer*, that we are not to dwell in the *acts* of the *Vnderſtanding*, which is the *Meditation*, and *Conſideration* of things; but in the *acts* of the *Will*, that is, in the *affects* and *deſires* of *vertue*, and the *imitation of Chriſt our Lord*; and this is to be of the *fruite* of *Prayer*. And ſo heere, the chiefe and beſt, and moſt profitable part of this *Exerciſe*, conſiſts in the *acts* of the *will*; and this is that, wherupon we muſt inſiſt moſt.

Tract. 5. c. 14.

Note.

The ſecond benefit which followes vpon this *Exerciſe*, is that it is more ſweet, and facill, then the reſt. For to

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those others, is necessary discourse, and labour of the *vnderstanding*, and *imagination*, to represent *formes* before it; which is the thing, that vseth to weary, and to breake the braynes, and therfore it cannot last so longe. Whereas towards this *Exercise*, there is no neede of *discourse*, but of *affects*, and *acts* of the *will*, which are produced without difficulty. For although it be true, that there is some *act* of the *Vnderstanding*, euen there; yet that, is presupposed by *Fayth*, without wearying vs therby. And as when we adore the *B. Sacrament*, we presuppose by *Fayth*, that Christ our Lord is *present* there; and all our attention, and imployment is, in adoring, reuering, louing, and begging fauours of that Lord, whome we know to be *present*; so it is in this *Exercise*. And from hence also it is, that the same, being more facill, one may continue, and perseuere in it, longer tyme. For euen to sick persons, who are not capable of any other *Prayer*, we are wont to aduise, that they are often to lift vp their harts to God, with some *affects* & *acts* of the *Will*, because they may be produ-

produced with facility. And therfore, although there were no other aduantage belonging to this *Exercise*, but only, that one may continue, and perseuere in it, longer tyme, then in the rest; we should haue reason, to esteeme it much, and therfore how much more, are we to do it, hauing so many aduantages besides.

The third, and principall thinge, & that which we are to obserue very well, is: That *the Presence of God* is not only considered, to the end, that we may dwell in that; but to the end, that it may serue vs, for a meanes to do those other things well, which we are to performe. For if we should content our selues, with hauing an attention to *the presence of God*, and therby did neglect our workes themselues, and did performe them with faults; this would be no good *deuotion*, but an *illusion*. We are alwayes to make account, that although we carry one of our eyes towards his diuine Maiesty, we must place the other, vpon the worke it selfe; that we may performe it well, for the loue of him. And our seeing, that

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we ſtand in the *Preſence of God*, muſt be the meanes, to make vs do all that, which we are to do, the better; and with the more perfection. And this, is much better done by this *Exerciſe*, then by others. For in the perſorming of others, the *Vnderſtanding* is much imployed, about thoſe *corporall figures*, which a man hath a mynde to ſet before himſelfe, or about thoſe *conceytes* which he will drawe out of that, which he hath preſent to him; and whilſt he will needs drawe this, or that good conſideration from thence, many tymes he markes not well, what he is doing, and ſo he falls out to do it ill.

But this *Exerciſe*, ſince it buſieth not the *Vnderſtanding*, doth not hinder, any way, the good performance of the workes; but rather it doth greatly helpe, that they may be exactly done. For he is doing them, for the loue of God; and in the *Preſence of God*, who lookes vpon him. And ſo he procures to do them, in ſuch ſort, and ſo well, as that they may be fit to appeare before the eyes of that diuine Maieſty; and that there

there may be nothing therein, which is vnworthy of his *Preſence*. Concerning which, we ſpake elſe where, of another point, which ſheweth another way of going in the *Preſence of God*, which is very good and profitable, and recommended by the Saynts; and therfore we will forbeare to repeate it heere.

Tract. 1. c. 3.

Chap. VI.

Certayne pious Conſiderations, of Gods Immenſity, and of his Preſence in all places, and in all things.

1. TO conſider that God is ſo immenſe and great, as he filleth all his creatures with his infinite Greatnes, and is more inwardly preſent in all things, then they be in their owne Eſſence. And notwithſtanding all this, he is not impriſoned heere in the world: and though there were many millions of worlds more, yet ſhould he be ſtill infinitly greater then they, in ſo much as it is impoſſible to fly frō him, ſith he is by his Eſſence, Preſēce, and

and power in all places; and all creatures be filled with his greatnes. This consideration should make vs more present to our selues in all our actions, both priuate, and publike, by representing to our selues, that Gods eyes be vpon vs; and making vnto our selues an Oratory in all places, sith he is euery where. We must excite in our selues affections of ioy, and of admiration, at so wonderfull a greatnes.

2. We must consider our selues, as liuing, and doing our actions in God, who enuironeth vs round, as doth the water of the Ocean compasse in the fish that swym, and liue therin. And this consideration, should keep vs from going and wandring out of our selues; seeing we haue God present within vs; as though we were his house; or by considering our selues enuironed without, & penetrated within by God, as though he were our owne, and belonging vnto vs.

3. To consider, how God sheweth himselfe in heauen to his Elect with vnueiled, and open face, working in them most glorious things:

and

and he giueth in ſome places on earth particuler ſignes of his preſence, as *Iacob* ſaw him on that myſticall ladder, whereof the Scriptures make mention. God alſo hath his aboad particulerly in the Churches, and Oratories; and in a more excellent manner in the iuſt, with whome he abideth by his grace, and worketh ſtrange and wonderfull thinges in them. But aboue all, he is with ſome great friends of his in this life, producing ſpiritually within them miraculous effects, as illuſtrations, diſcourſes of the ſoule, reuelations of diuine myſteries, which be all ſignes, and teſtimonyes of his particular preſence. All this ought to make vs the more attentiue, and preſent to God, and our ſelues; and more compoſed both within, and without.

THE COLLOQVY.

O my ſoule, thou haſt within thee all good things, how doeſt thou not enioy them? Within thee is thy ſoueraigne freind, and Father; reioyce to haue him with thee: ioyne thee ioyntly with him, and giue vnto him thy whole

hart.

hart. If thou art poore, thou hast God with thee, who is rich in mercy, runne vnto him, that he may impart vnto thee of his riches. If thou art weake, and pusillanimous, thou hast God with thee, who is fortitude it selfe; and vnited with him, thou maist doe all things in vertue of him: wherfore then doest thou seeke without thee, with anxietie, helpe of the creatures, hauing within thee, the omnipotency of the Creator? O my Creator, my God, and my all things, perfect in me this strayte coniunctiõ which thou hast with me, vniting thy selfe also with me, by the perfect vnion of grace, that I also may conioyne my selfe with thee, by the perfect vnion of charity. Amen.

FINIS.